■ WORLD / A22
US Homeland Security official arrested for online child seduction

■ LIFESTYLE / C1
How to picnic in style: Tips from Glenda Barretto, Reggie Aspiras, Micky Fenix

■ METRO / A19
Number-coding suspended in Metro, except Makati, starting today until June 2

■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-8
Peek into Ruffa's closet and drool over a few of her favorite things

GIs donate rare blood type to save little Frail

By Nikko Dizon

THE FAMILY OF A 3-YEAR-OLD GIRL NAMED Frail had earlier given up on her.

She had been downed by typhoid fever and anemia. Doctors at the Zamboanga City Medical Center had said that could have killed her.

She also needed transfusion of a rare blood

4 GIs/ A10

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Thursday, April 6, 2006 ★★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 119 P18 website: www.inq7.net

New York Times editorial: Dark Days for RP Democracy

THE NEW YORK TIMES, IN AN EDITORIAL YESterday, urged President George W. Bush to warn President Macapagal-Arroyo that she was "undermining a hard-won democracy" and making her country "vulnerable to terrorist pressures."

The editorial, "Dark Days for Philippine Democracy," said:

"Filipinos thought they had put an end to electoral chicanery and governmental intimidation

NEW YORK/ A17

Do a Thaksin, GMA told; No outrage, Palace says

5 senators launch Gloria resign drive

By Philip C. Tubeza and TJ Burgonio

TO MARK PRESIDENT MACAPAgal-Arroyo's 59th birthday yesterday, five senators launched a nationwide campaign to force her out of office.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. joined Senate President Franklin Drilon and Senators Panfilo Lacson, Jinggoy Estrada and Jamby Madrigal in launching the Gloria Resign Movement before cheering Senate employees holding placards calling on Ms Arroyo to quit.

Pimentel, Estrada and Madrigal said the President should follow the example of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and step down.

On Tuesday, after months of ignoring calls for his resignation over charges of corruption and abuse of power, Thaksin announced that he would step down from office.

Pimentel said the senators would go on a nationwide road show during their Lenten break to drum up support for the Gloria Resign Movement.

"This is my birthday wish for her," he said, holding up a "Gloria Resign" sticker.

5 SENATORS/ A8

No Bhumibol to tell GMA it's time to go

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE STUNNING RESIGNATION AND sudden turnabout of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra call attention to the higher threshold of resistance (some might call it "threshold of shame") of President Macapagal-Arroyo to widespread resignation demands, which have put her government under siege from street protests since last June over allegations that she cheated in the 2004 election.

A number of factors contributed to Thaksin's resignation. He announced it after a meeting with King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Thaksin said he would "not accept the premier post" for the sake of national unity but would stay as caretaker prime minister until parliament selects his successor. His meeting with the king suggests the king had inter-

NO BHUMIBOL/ A17

Poisoning shocks best, brightest in science school

By Luige A. del Puerto

POLICE HAVE FILED CHARGES OF FRUSTRATed homicide against a male graduating student of the Philippine Science High School in Quezon City for allegedly pouring a toxic substance into someone's water jug in February.

The state-run PSHS is well-known as the breeding ground of the best and brightest in the sciences.

A female student who drank from the jug more than an hour later was taken to hospital and had to undergo dialysis at the National

POISONING/ A10

ERIK ARAZAS
GIANT

BATTING FOR THE BEST. Baseball competition in the annual Manila Youth Games kicks off at the Rizal Memorial on Wednesday pitting the Smokey Mountain Team A (with Gino Riparip at the bat) against Vicente Lim Elementary School. Smokey Mountain team won that one. The games which started last Sunday will run till Sunday, April 9.

Thai king is 'Strength of the Land'

BANGKOK—KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ, who plays a key role in Thailand's political life, is the world's longest reigning monarch who wields enormous influence over the nation.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra announced Tuesday he would step down after holding talks with the king. Thaksin said he was resigning to end a dragging crisis out of respect for the monarch in his 60th year on the throne.

In a culture where religion and royalty are intertwined, the 78-year-old monarch has carefully nurtured his role as caretaker of his people and helped Thailand weather six decades of political and social upheaval.

The king, whose full name means "Strength of the Land—Incomparable Power," was only 18 when his brother died under mysterious circumstances and the mantle of the monarchy was thrust upon him in June 1946.

After his ascension to the throne, he went to Switzerland to study and was not formally crowned until four years later in May 1950, when he received the official royal name Rama the Ninth.

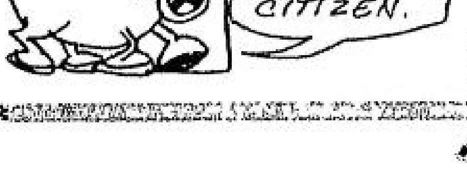
The grandeur of the title matches the reverence with which the Thai monarch—an urbane man who is also an accomplished jazz saxophonist, compos-

THAI KING/ A17

REUTERS
LYN RILLON

PARALLEL LIVES? A pensive First Couple and their playful granddaughter Mikaela Gloria celebrate President Arroyo's birthday with a thanksgiving Mass at the St. Augustine Parish Church. (Left) Empty victory in Thailand for PM Thaksin, who won in a snap election but quit.

Highs and lows mark GMA's special day


HAYAAN NA LANG MAG CELEBRATE ANG SENIOR CITIZEN.

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA normally has a knee-jerk put down reply to solicited comments about his supposed tormentor.

But on President Macapagal-Arroyo's 59th birthday yesterday Estrada quickly did an about face.

Estrada was asked by reporters during a break in his Sandiganbayan trial if he thought Ms Arroyo should follow the example of Thaksin Shinawatra, who had announced he was resigning as prime minister of Thailand over charges of corruption and abuse of power.

"I hope so," was Estrada's swift reply.

HIGHS/ A8

'Pinoys feel situation here much brighter'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Tonette Orejas

PRESIDENT MACAPAgal-Arroyo will not follow in the footsteps of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra because the two are faced with totally different situations, Malacañang officials yesterday said.

"Not only is there a difference in the form of government, there is no upheaval or outrage against the government or President Arroyo," the President's adviser on political affairs, Gabriel Claudio, told reporters.

Claudio was among the officials who yesterday accompanied Ms Arroyo to Lubao when she attended a Mass to celebrate her 59th birthday. Lubao is the hometown of Ms Arroyo's late father, former President Diosdado Macapagal.

Claudio said there was gloom, pessimism and a lot of outrage in Thailand before Thaksin announced that he would step down. "Such is not the case in the Philippines where there is far

PINOYS/ A8

Unexpected evidence presented at Erap trial

By Volt Contreras and Nelson Flores

OUSTED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada, apparently scrambling for solid evidence to supplement his routine blanket denials, yesterday resurrected literary giant Nick Joaquin as witness for his defense.

In his third appearance in his Sandiganbayan trial, Estrada's counsel, Jose Flaminiano, presented to the justices the rather unexpected piece of evidence and marked it as Exhibit 457.

It was the book "Joseph Estrada and Other Sketches" by the late Joaquin, a National Artist for Literature who was also famous for his portraits of various Philippine VIPs.

Estrada said one of his first acts as San Juan mayor was to order the municipal police chief to launch a crackdown on "jueteng" operations, an episode Joaquin mentioned in the piece titled "Erap in a New Role."

UNEXPECTED/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming more frequent rains over the eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/05/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONTPAGE

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Army captain in coup plot falls

By Dona Pazzibugan

IN AN INDICATION OF A continuing plot against President Macapagal-Arroyo, the military has arrested an Army captain who was allegedly tasked to lead an assault on the Army headquarters as part of last month's aborted coup plot.

Capt. Dante Langkit, a member of the elite First Scout Ranger Regiment who was last assigned in the Special Operations Command's [Socom] operations unit [G3], was actively recruiting officers for destabilization plots, said Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon.

"During the early part of this year, Langkit was already meeting several officers he had recruited and giving instructions to organize forces for what he alleged as the impending D-Day," Esperon said in a news conference yesterday.

"Under Oplan Gemstone, Langkit was supposed to lead forces that would attack and take over the Philippine Army headquarters," added Esperon as he and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga made a show of presenting Langkit to the media.

Langkit, who reportedly went absent without official leave [AWOL] on Jan. 17 when four Oakwood mutineers escaped from an Army detention facility, was arrested on April 2 outside Max's Restaurant along Quezon Avenue in Quezon City.

Langkit did not appear defiant yesterday. Though handcuffed in the back and his arms locked with those of two military escorts, Langkit even managed to give a smile at fellow Army officials who avoided greeting him back.

The trained Socom psy-war operative was allowed to put on a gray button-down shirt over the orange "Army Detainee" shirt he was wearing.

CAPT. LANGKIT smiles behind AFP chief of staff Gen. Generoso Senga.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

According to Esperon, they seized from Langkit a computer flash disk containing documents about "Oplan Gemstone," nine cellular phones, thousands of pesos worth of prepaid cellcards and cash amounting to P81,300.

"He remains somehow defiant [during interrogation] but the contents of the cellphones and the documents we recovered from the flash disk indicate that he is active [in recruiting]. He even claimed in a TV interview that he continues with recruitment activities," said Esperon, referring to GMA-7's interview last week with a military officer whose face was not shown.

D-Day preempted

He admitted they have no idea how many officers and soldiers Langkit was able to recruit, but said one company commander in Central Luzon would testify that Langkit tried to recruit him.

Esperon also admitted they have not found out the D-Day for the supposed attack on Fort Bonifacio, but he believed they have successfully preempted the plan.

Oplan Gemstone, the latest of the operational plans supposedly hatched by military rebels to unseat Ms Arroyo, was the brainchild of the group Para sa Bayan [PSB] that is linked to sacked Scout Rangers chief Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim.

Esperon said Oplan Gemstone is distinct from Oplan Hackle supposedly hatched by the Makabayang Kawal Pilipino more popularly known as the Magdalo Group, although the two operational plans involve more or less the same forces.

Citing intelligence reports, Esperon claimed Langkit was part of attempts to reorganize the Magdalo Group after the failed July 2003 Oakwood mutiny. At the same time, he was active in the PSB.

Langkit, however, is not among the 20 Army officers led by Lim who were recommended for court-martial for plotting to oust Ms Arroyo last Feb. 24.

A contingent from the Marines led by Col. Ariel Querubin who were implicated in the planned withdrawal of support have so far not been recommended for court-martial.

Ms Arroyo placed the country under a state of emergency from Feb. 24 to March 3 due to an alleged conspiracy between military and communist rebels to topple her government.

Senga did not reply to questions if Langkit's arrest showed a new coup plot against Ms Arroyo exists.

"Before we speculate we should wait for the conclusion of the investigation because any speculation at this point would just result to different impressions and conclusions and this might not be good for all of us," Senga said.

When Senga refused to answer whether Langkit's group was a security threat, Esperon interjected: "But I hope you recognize that the apprehension of Captain Langkit means a lot. It tells you a lot."

Langkit is a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class '95 that includes alleged core leaders of the Oakwood siege. He was cleared of any involvement in the mutiny since he was not at the Oakwood Ayala Premier.

Last assignment

He was even assigned with the Socom operations unit [G-3] while Esperon was the chief of Socom, his last assignment before he became Army chief last August.

Esperon did not explain why Langkit was taken back into Socom despite accusations he was involved in coup plots.

Esperon said they received reports that Langkit met with the four escapees, Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza and 1Lts. Lawrence San Juan, Sonny Sarmiento and Patricio Bumidang Jr. shortly after their escape.

San Juan, who was part of the elite anti-terrorist Light Reaction Company [LRC], was captured last Feb. 21. Officials later said they have recovered a flash disk containing documents about "Final Talk 2" detailing an alleged agreement between military and communist rebels to bring down the Arroyo administration.

Two other officers linked to the Magdalo mutiny, 2Lts. Aldrin Baldonado and Angelbert Gay also went AWOL shortly after Jan. 17.

Villar says House stalled on budget

By TJ Burgonio
and Michael Lim Ubac

SENATOR MANUEL VILLAR accused the House of Representatives yesterday of deliberately waiting up to the last minute to pass the P1.040 trillion 2006 national budget, after sitting on it for more than seven months, as a ploy to have the 2005 budget reenacted to bankroll the administration-backed Charter change.

"It seems their plan is to have a reenacted budget until the new parliament is formed and that parliament will be the one to approve the budget for the year," the chair of the Senate committee on finance told reporters late yesterday.

Unlike a regular budget which has allocations for specific purposes, a reenacted budget has no such specific provisions while automatically adopting the previous year's total budget.

"They can freely use this budget for Cha-cha, for the plebiscite and for the initiative. All these can be easily funded [by a reenacted budget]. Then the new parliament will approve the budget," Villar stressed.

After months of delay, the House approved the budget measure at past 10 p.m. Tuesday and directed that the measure be transmitted to the Senate. The process of printing and transmission usually takes about a week.

No way it will pass

Villar predicted that the Senate would have a tough time passing the House measure, which adopted the President's proposed budget en toto, since it has only four weeks from the time it resumes sessions May 15 after the Easter break, until it adjourns on June 10.

"There's no way we will pass the budget as passed by the House," he said, stressing that the Senate would thoroughly review the measure.

"It stayed in the House for eight months, and they're giving us only a month to formally tackle this, and that includes the one week that it takes to print the bill," he added.

Villar said that even if the Senate worked double time and passed the budget before Congress adjourns on June 10, there would be a fierce debate and even a stalemate during the bicameral conference.

Voting 147-17, the House passed on third and final reading Tuesday night, with a jubilant Speaker Jose de Venecia promptly directing House Secretary General Roberto Nazareno to "personally deliver" the 1,057-page General Appropriations Act to the Senate.

Pump-priming economy

"We expect this new budget, when ultimately signed into law by the President, to pump-prime the economy and help defeat poverty in the country," said the Speaker.

He said the increased allocations for departments, agencies and all priority programs of the government could "create millions of new jobs, build more classrooms and school buildings, hospital and health services, irrigation systems, roads and bridges to facilitate efficient transport system through the country and increase social services for our people."

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Survey says Pinoys still prefer presidential form

DESPITE THE REPORTED THOUSANDS OF signatures affixed to an ongoing signature campaign in support of a petition pushing for a shift to a parliamentary system of government, a recent survey by Pulse Asia showed that majority of Filipinos continue to favor retaining the present presidential and unitary system.

About one in two (54 percent) Filipinos, or 26 million Filipino adults are not in favor of changing the country's presidential form of government to a parliamentary one. Thirty-three percent are in favor while 13 percent are still undecided.

The percentage of Filipinos who favored a shift to parliamentary system rose by 7 percentage points from 26 percent in the previous nationwide survey on Charter change in October 2005.

The latest survey found that public sentiment on this issue was generally constant across the country's geographic areas and socio-economic classes.

The ongoing signature campaign, endorsed by President Macapagal-Arroyo herself, contains the proposition: "Do you approve of the amendments of Article 6 and 7 of the 1987 Constitution changing the form of government from the present bicameral-presidential to a unicameral-parliamentary system of government in order to achieve greater efficiency, simplicity and economy in government; and providing an Article 18 as Transitory Provisions for the orderly shift from one system to another?"

The survey also showed that 55 percent of Filipinos would not support a change to a federal system of government. In Mindanao, where there is reportedly a clamor for a federal government, the majority (52 percent) is not in favor of a federal system.

Majority of Filipinos (64 to 76 percent) also had little/almost none/no knowledge at all of the 1987 Constitution, the survey found.

The Pulse Asia survey was conducted from Feb. 18 to March 4, using face-to-face field interviews with 1,200 respondents 18 years old and above using a multistage probability sampling with ±3 percent error margin. *Kate Pedroso, PDI Research*

GMA vows more powers to LGUs

By Christine O. Avendaño
and Nroman Bordadora

IN AN APPARENT BID TO ENSURE SUPPORT for the people's initiative to amend the Constitution, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday promised that local government units would have wider powers under a parliamentary form of government.

Ms Arroyo, who has advocated a parliament government, said among the benefits of having a new Constitution once Charter change is achieved include speedier action on the laws to be made by a united Congress and executive branch.

"The implementation of laws would also be faster and the powers of our local governments would be wider which should be the case," the President said.

Cagayan de Oro City Rep. Constantino Jaraula, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, told the INQUIRER that with the needed signatures expected this week, a formal petition may be filed before the Commission on Elections next week.

He expects that after a month of signature verification in the middle of May, the Comelec may already schedule a plebiscite in late June or early July.

Jaraula expects the people's initiative to be questioned before the Comelec either when it starts to verify the signatures or when it schedules the plebiscite.

"We have reports that we have already reached 10 million signatures. With this overwhelming support, why must we bother with legal technicalities," House Majority Prospero Nograles said.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero of Sorsogon said that the opposition will question the people's initiative before the Supreme Court because of the lack of an enabling law.

But President Macapagal-Arroyo's counsel for election matters Romulo Macalintal yesterday said Republic Act No. 6735 or the Initiative and Referendum Act remained a valid law even if it was declared to be inadequate for amending the Charter through people's initiative by the Supreme Court in 1997. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

CHEd warns failing medical schools to shape up or face closure

By Alcuin Papa

THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER Education (CHEd) has warned medical schools to take steps to improve the passing rates of their graduates in the board exam or face closure.

According to recent statistics from the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), the passing rate in the medical board exams in the past few years was between 54 to 56 percent.

The PRC blamed the low passing rate on the proliferation of medical schools in the provinces and deteriorating quality of education in these schools.

Hence, the CHEd urged medical schools to shape up or face the same fate of 24 nursing schools which were recently ordered closed.

Catherine Castañeda of the CHEd's office for programs and standards, said there was a need for the "intensive screening" of teachers for medical schools. "We have mobilized teams to evaluate nursing and medical schools on a regular basis," she said.

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Critics fear crackdown with antiterror bill

By Norman Bordadora and Christine O. Avendaño

PROVISIONS PENALIZING ACTS that allegedly incite and facilitate terrorism or the failure to disclose acts of alleged terrorism are the major features of the Anti-Terror Bill that make militant groups fear it would be used to crack down on the administration's foes once it is signed into law.

"The terror bill which purportedly targets acts of terrorism, trains its guns on legitimate expressions of dissent," said Gabriela party-list Rep. Liza Maza. "It's deliberately overbroad, superfluous and vague definition inevitably gives the Arroyo regime the power to identify individuals as terrorists" even if they are engaged in peaceful activities such as demonstrations and rallies.

The bill, which passed the House of Representatives Tuesday night, still has to go through the Senate before President Macapagal-Arroyo can sign it into law, but she welcomed it nonetheless as a move that took the government fight against terrorism "a step higher.."

The bill's provision on inciting terrorism reads: "It shall be unlawful for any person or group of persons... to incite others to the execution of any acts specified (in this Act) by means of speeches, proclamations, writings... tending to incite others to terrorism."

Inciting terrorism is punishable by six to 12 years in prison and a penalty of P2.5 million. Acts of terrorism carry a maximum penalty of life in prison and fines ranging from P2.5 million to P5 million, not P5 million to P10 million as earlier reported.

"With the terror bill, things are bound to get worse for those who choose to voice out opinions contrary to the administration. This practically bans any form of opposition in this country," Maza added.

Failure to disclose alleged terrorist acts is punishable by a maximum of 12 years in prison and a fine of P50,000 to P100,000.

"A provision of the proposed legislation which punishes those who fail to disclose knowledge of any acts of terrorism can be used against members of the media who will in turn be compelled to reveal all their sources and thus impedes the delivery of news and information," Maza said.

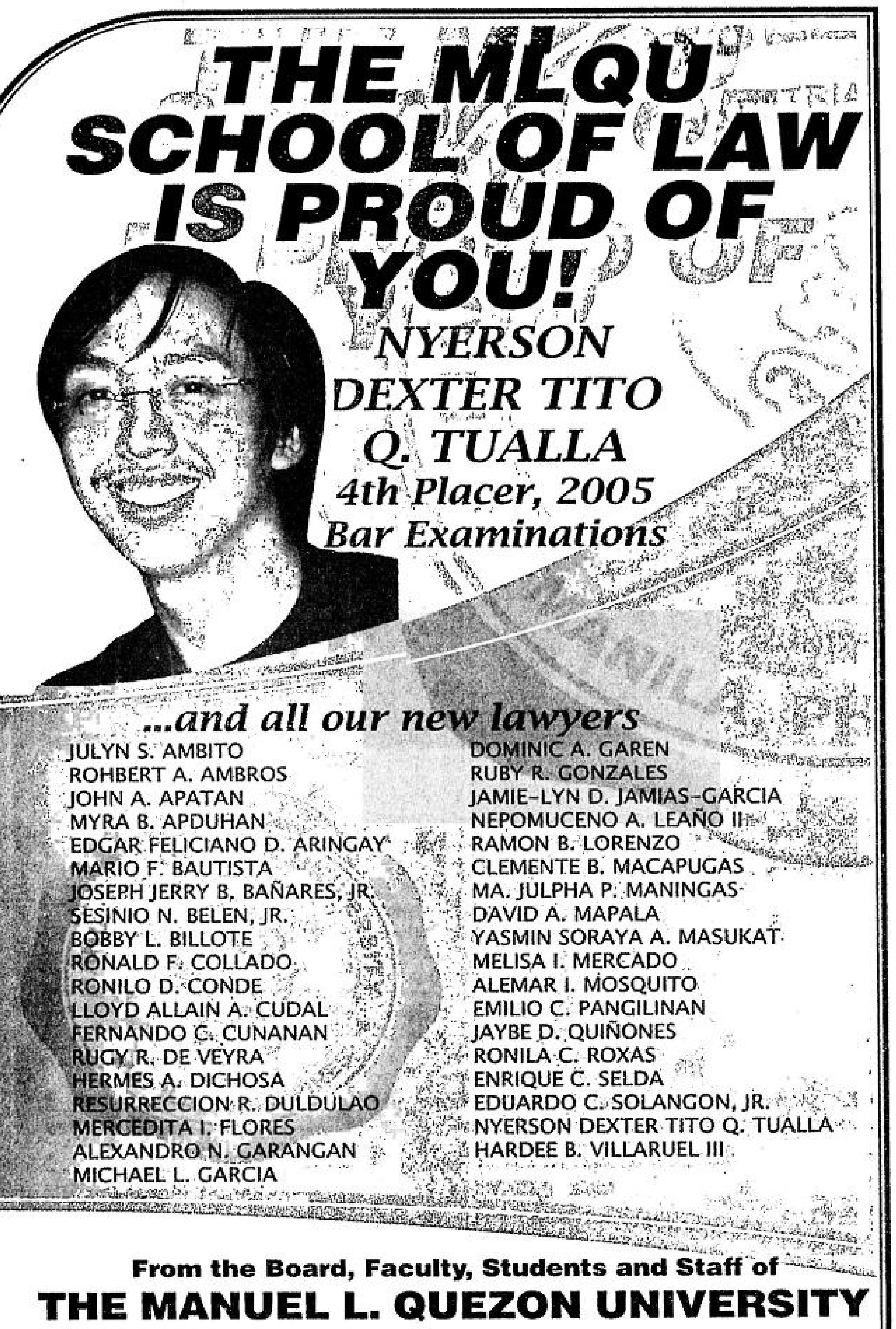
During the period of amendments, members of party-list groups asked that the period within which a suspected terrorist may be held without charges be reduced from three days as proposed to just 36 hours. The amendment was voted down.

Despite allegations from militant groups that the antiterror bill would curtail basic freedoms, the sponsor of the bill, Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco, said it was necessary under the circumstances.

"We should not wait for bigger and deadlier terror attacks to convince us of the immediacy and indispensability of an antiterror law," Cuenco said.

"While we await the action of the Senate to do its part on the measure, I would like to reaffirm the unremitting commitment of this administration to end the cycle of terror and constrict terror cells through all avenues of political action, law enforcement and international cooperation," Ms Arroyo said in a statement.

Saying that world was watching the country's efforts to fight terror, Ms Arroyo lauded the House "for taking a bold and ambitious stand in the interest of national and global security."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From the Board, Faculty, Students and Staff of
THE MANUEL L. QUEZON UNIVERSITY

BIR, Customs hike 1st quarter collection

By Alcuin Papa and Leila B. Salaverria

THE GOVERNMENT'S MAJOR REVENUE generating agencies yesterday boasted that they surpassed their respective revenue targets for the first quarter of the year.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) said it had already exceeded its revenue target for the first quarter of this year by P3 billion.

On the other hand, the Bureau of Customs generated total collections of P42.277 billion in the first quarter, P3.654 billion, or 9.5 percent higher than its P38.623 billion target for the period.

The 2006 first quarter collection of Customs is also P35.7 percent higher than the bureau's collection in the same period last year, which stood at P31.166 billion.

BIR Assistant Commissioner Lucita Rodriguez said the bureau was on track to meet its revenue target of P675 billion for this year.

"Hopefully, we will reach our target. We need to meet our target and we are on track," she said.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales, who is in China attending the general assembly of the World Customs Organization, said in a statement that the bureau was on its way to meeting its target collection.

The BOC is tasked to collect P192 billion for 2006.

"P192 billion in collections this year is a tough target, but we are getting there," he said.

Rodriguez told a media forum in Greenhills, San Juan yesterday that for the month of April, they expect to collect P75 billion.

The last day for filing of income tax returns for private employees is April 17. "We call on everyone to file their returns as soon as they can and pay the correct taxes," she said.

In January, Rodriguez said they missed their target "by a few millions" at P49 billion, but met the target for February at P41 billion and March at P42.6 billion.

"By the time we reach the sixth month, we should be above 50 percent of our target," Rodriguez said.

She attributed their success in tax collection to help from the public and private sector on information dissemination, their e-services (electronic services), the new Value Added Tax law and their new tax mapping scheme.

"With the new tax mapping scheme, it will allow us to see additional sources of income like previous nonregistrants," Rodriguez said.

Another factor helping improve tax collection, Rodriguez revealed, is the new attrition law where employees are given bonuses when they meet their target.

Income tax still takes the biggest piece of the revenue pie, followed by VAT and excise taxes.

The BOC met and exceeded all its targets from January to March, but the biggest surplus revenue was recorded in March.

Based on preliminary data, collection in March has reached P16.711 billion, 17.2 percent higher than the target collection of P14.258 billion.

The surplus collection for January was P898 million, or 7.4 percent higher than its P12.083 billion target.

For February, the bureau exceeded its collection by P303 million, or 2.5 percent of its P12.282 billion target.

Corrections

IN THE APRIL 4 issue, a photo caption on Page A22 misstated the name of Filipino football player. His name is Andres Crisanto Gonzales—not Andres Cristiano.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a story on Page A22—"Manila beats rest, lifts number coding"—misstated that Toby Tiangco is the mayor of Malabon City. The mayor of Malabon City is Canuto Oreta while Toby Tiangco is the mayor of Navotas.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 6, 2006
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Gen 17:3-9
Gospel: John 8:51-59

Jesus said to the Jews, "Truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never experience death." The Jews replied, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died and the prophets as well, but you say: 'Whoever keeps my word will never experience death.' Who do you claim to be? Do you claim to be greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets also died."

Then Jesus said, "If I were to praise myself, it would count for nothing. But he who gives glory to me is the Father, the very one you claim as your God, although you don't know him. I know him and if I were to say that I don't know him, I would be a liar like you. But I know him and I keep his word.

As for Abraham, your ancestor, he looked forward to the day when I would come; and he rejoiced when he saw it."

The Jews then said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?" And Jesus said "Truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." They then picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and left the Temple.

Commentary

God made a covenant with Abraham for future generations and when they kept the covenant they were truly the children of Abraham, and God was their God. Jesus claims to be the child of God, and if we are true to Jesus' Word, then we will not know death; we will be a covenant greater than Abraham's with God. Jesus accuses those who reject him as not being the children of Abraham and declares that he is of God, that he is I AM, and they respond viciously, intending to stone him to death in rage and self-righteousness.

Who do we reject? What truth about other children of God do we refuse to hear and what children of God do we destroy mercilessly, self-righteously?

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DPWH braces for travel rush

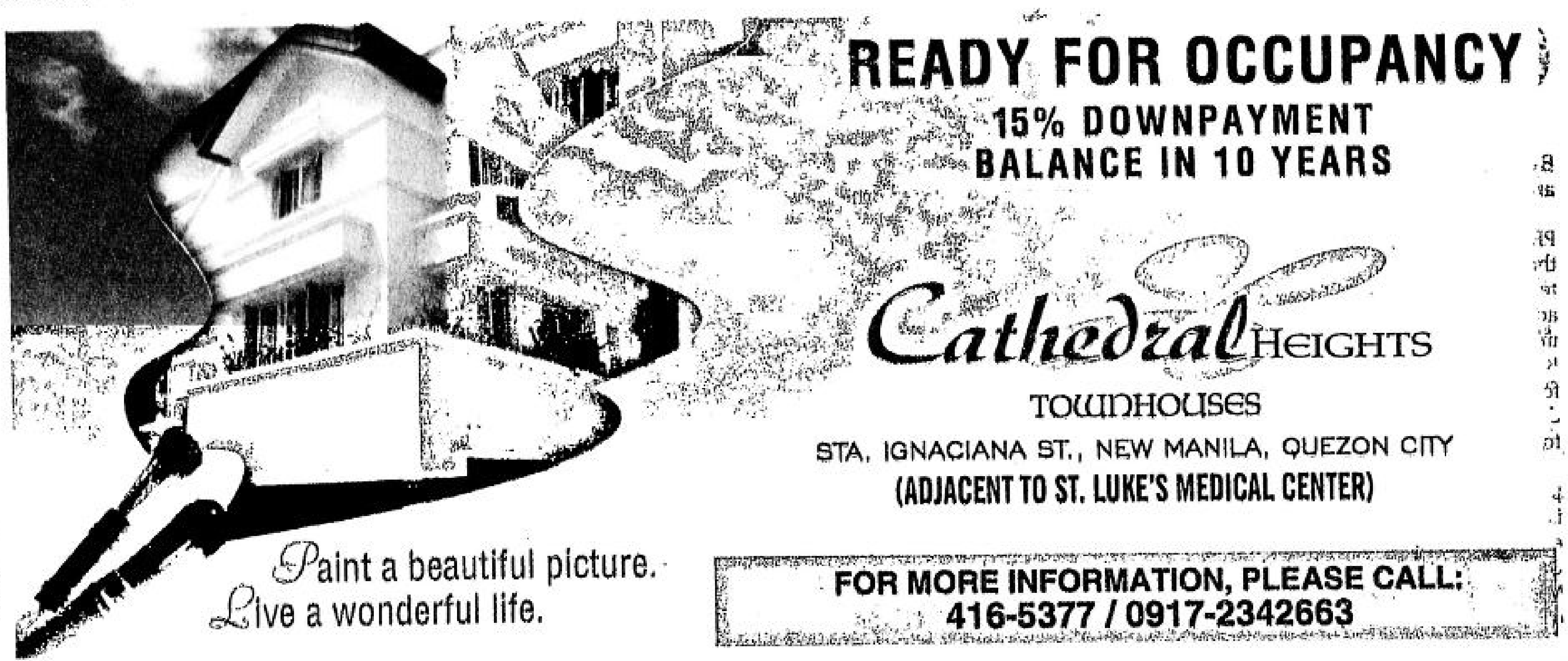
By Leila B. Salaverria

IN ANTICIPATION OF THE RUSH OF TRAVELers during the Holy Week, officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways have been directed to ensure that motorists would have a smooth ride.

In a March 30 memorandum, Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. ordered the department's regional directors and district engineers to install directional signs and to put clear road markings on all national thoroughfares to make traveling easier and safer.

He also instructed officials to patch up potholes on the roads.

"The safety of all national roads and bridges is our responsibility. All these structures should be free from obstruction," Ebdane said in a statement.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5 scholars show support for Erap at trial

By Volt Contreras

THE FIVE YOUNG MEN WHO CAME yesterday to the Sandiganbayan could easily make Exhibit A for the defense in the case against ousted President Joseph Estrada.

But the court obviously wasn't even aware they existed.

They also didn't know each other although they were linked together through the Erap Foundation Inc.—a charity outfit chaired by Estrada.

The five came to show support for the embattled movie star-turned politician who had taken the witness stand in his own defense in the Sandiganbayan trial in what could be the most challenging performance of his life.

Godfather to the poor

For these EFI beneficiaries, including a teenage boy who had competed in math contests abroad, Estrada was "godfather"—not to gambling lords, but to the hundreds of graduates from poor families around the country.

Proudly wearing EFI stickers on their shirts, they sat quietly through the proceedings to watch their patron dispute charges that he pocketed millions of pesos in "jueteng" (illegal numbers racket) payola.

Part of the payoffs was allegedly stashed away in another scholarship arm in his name, the "Erap Muslim Youth Foundation."

The EFI was set up in 1998, when Estrada was still a senator, ahead of the more controversial EMYF whose initial funds amounting to P200 million had been ordered frozen by the court.

"I brought them here to show our sympathy (for Estrada) and prove that his foundations have real scholars and were not used for money laundering," said Carmencita Ancheta, the EFI director since 2003.

Ancheta was referring to Kevin Yambao, 13, of Tipas, Taguig; Ronnie Alonzo, 26, of Pagadian City; Anthony Cubero, 25, of Davao City; Denver Torres, 22, of Tayug, Pangasinan; and Ferdinand Casao, 27, of Estrada's hometown San Juan.

Yambao and Torres are still studying while the rest have finished college. Alonzo earned a degree in civil engineering; Cubero, aeronautical engineering, and Casao, banking and finance.

6,000 beneficiaries

The scholars didn't know each other until they met for the first time yesterday at the courtroom, she said.

EFI has supported the studies of around 6,000 youths nationwide, of whom 2,512 have finished a four-year course. Majority studied to become teachers, although they also included engineering, accounting and commerce graduates.

Scholars receive P1,000 to P2,000 in allowances per semester, usually for their textbooks, Ancheta explained. Applicants should be in the top 20 of their class and have maintained an average grade of 85 to qualify.

When Estrada was still in office, EFI funds were mainly proceeds from a Valentine Dance held yearly at the Manila Hotel and from the Erap Golf Cup, she said. Such fund raisers, however, were discontinued after "our chairman" was ousted and detained.

Asked how the EFI had been raising money since, Ancheta could not immediately name a particular major donor but conceded that the foundation had now become more "selective" in picking scholars because of limited funds.

Math wizard

Fortunate to be selected was Yambao, currently a freshman excelling in math at the Sen. Renato Cayetano Memorial Science and Technology High School in Taguig. He bagged an EFI scholarship last year after his mother Teresita called up a radio station to appeal to donors who could fund Kevin's trip to India, where he was to compete in an international math competition.

The foundation responded and not only sponsored Kevin's trip (he placed third in the contest) but went on to support his high school studies.

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Unexpected evidence presented at Erap's trial

From page A1

The day after he issued that order, "our jail which was too small became a 'Standing Room Only' [affair]" because the arrested jueteng collectors and runners numbered around 60, he said.

The mothers and children of the detained men would crowd his office the next day, "crying and begging" that their breadwinners be released.

Pity them

It was then that he "took pity at them," especially when the wives bemoaned the lack of jobs available to their husbands. The women said their spouses were willing to work even as the town's garbage collectors just to feed their children or send them to school, Estrada added.

"Nick Joaquin—who lived in San Juan—is a national artist who would not write something that is not true," the ex-President said.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio butted in an objection, saying that remark from Estrada already amounted to an "opinion" that was uncalled for.

"Nick Joaquin is more noted for fiction writing," the government lawyer said, drawing chuckles from the courtroom spectators.

In disputing allegations in the P4-billion plunder charges against him, Estrada also said that during his political career, he had worked to have the numbers "legalized." He said this would raise charity funds for the poor and finally give "dignity" to the thousands jueteng operators had employed underground.

At the resumption by Flaminiano of Estrada's direct examination, the ousted President responded with his familiar, blanket denials of the charges against him.

All lies

"These are all lies. I did not receive a single centavo from jueteng and I never consented to jueteng ever since the time I was mayor," he told the jampacked court, speaking in Filipino.

This was when Flaminiano read out a portion of the charge sheet stating that Estrada, as then President, "collected directly or indirectly P545 million in the form of gifts, shares, percentage and kickbacks and other forms of pecuniary benefits in consideration or protection of illegal gambling."

"I never conspired with anybody, especially with jueteng lords," he said.

Estrada said "my policy did not change against all forms of illegal gambling" when he became a senator.

But this time, "I felt the need to provide them (jueteng collectors, runners) jobs which the government had failed to give."

Double standard

There is a "double standard of justice" when gambling is legal for the rich who can afford to play in casinos but illegal for the poor who are subjected to "harassment and extortion," Estrada said.

At the Senate, his "first privilege speech" was about the merits of legalizing jueteng, he said. At the time, he said, jueteng bet collections reached P9 million in Metro Manila and P3 million in Central Luzon "daily" or a total of "P360 million monthly."

In that speech, he added, he also recalled that even former President Fidel Ramos, when he still headed the Philippine Constabulary under the Marcos regime, "recommended" the legalization of jueteng to the Batasang Pambansa but drew opposition from "moralists."

Estrada noted that when he became Vice-President, Ramos appointed him chief of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission whose mandate was mainly focused on kidnapping, car theft and illegal drugs. "Unfortunately, jueteng was not one of them," he said.

His drive to legalize jueteng took on a new life early in his presidency, when he asked his appointed chair of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, former Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma, to do a "study" on that proposal.

Bigger rally on Erap's birthday

Currently kept under house arrest at his Tanay rest house, Estrada will resume his testimony after the court breaks for Easter next week.

Plunder is punishable by death through lethal injection although this is unlikely to be carried out in the case of Estrada if he is convicted. Malacañang has initiated talks with the ousted President, fearing a backlash from his impoverished followers.

Outside the St. Peter Parish on Commonwealth Avenue, near the Sandiganbayan, about 300 supporters held their usual rally demanding that Estrada be released. Intermission numbers featured hip hop dancers and karaoke singers. Sandwiches were distributed.

The ralliers vowed a bigger show when Estrada again takes the stand on April 19, which is his 69th birthday. *With reports from DJ Yap and Melissa de Quiros*

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Cops who 'invited' David, Beltran face charges

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE HAS RECOMMENDED THE FILing of charges against the policemen and government agents who arrested UP Professor Randy David, Akbayan president Ronald Llamas and Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran and banned rallies at the height of the state of national emergency.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, chair of the sub-committee of the committee on justice and human rights, recommended the filing of criminal, civil and administrative charges against the policemen who carried out the illegal arrests and dispersed and banned rallies during the emergency state.

"We cannot allow such acts to go unpunished coming as it does with the pronouncement by no less than the President herself, immediately after the lifting of the state of national emergency, that she is willing to reimpose a state of national emergency should the same become necessary," he said in the committee report.

"The immediate filing of charges against these erring police officers is necessary if we are to prevent a repeat of these acts found to be a reckless disregard of our laws and the Constitution," he added.

The subcommittee conducted a hearing on the arrest of David, Llamas, Beltran, retired Gen. Ramon Montaño and the banning of rallies on March 13 after senators filed a resolution condemning these illegal acts carried out in compliance with Proclamation No. 1017, which laid the basis for the state of emergency.

David and Llamas were invited for questioning by the police while marching on Edsa to mark the 20th anniversary of the 1986 people's revolt on Feb. 24, hauled off to the prosecutor's office and charged with violation of Batas Pambansa 880 or the Public Assembly Act, before being released for further investigation.

That same day, the President issued PP 1017 and placed the country under a state of emergency after the military allegedly uncovered a plot by elite AFP and police units planning to join protest rallies and withdraw support from the President.

The following day, agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group invited for questioning Beltran while he was about to leave his home in Del Monte City, Bulacan, using an October 1985 warrant for a case of inciting to rebellion as basis.

The police tried to arrest Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and other party-list representatives at the Sulo Hotel in Quezon City that same day but were able to elude them. On that day, the police invited to Camp Crame retired Gen. Ramon Montaño who was playing golf in Cavite.

In his report, Pangilinan said that being neither a suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus nor a declaration of martial law, PP 1017 could not be used to justify acts such as warrant-less arrests and seizures, ban on public assemblies and the imposition of curfew, takeover of media and press censorship, and hamletting.

Group slams Meralco offer

By Alcuin Papa

IT'S MAKING A MOCKERY OF THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission (ERC) and is misleading to the public.

This was the reaction of a power consumer advocate group to a letter sent by the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) in which the company said it was allowing other power producers to supply the electricity requirements of its large industrial and commercial customers who consume at least 1 megawatt (MW) a month.

Pete Ilagan, president of the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reform, told a media forum in San Juan yesterday that the letter should have been sent to the ERC rather than Malacañang.

"The letter is making a mockery of the ERC and its existence as a regulator. Malacañang has no authority to decide on the issue of competition. It is the height of arrogance on the part of Meralco not to recognize the authority of the ERC. I pity the ERC. It has the sole authority of regulating the industry. Yet the letter was sent to the Palace," Ilagan said.

He added that the letter is also "misleading" the public since the competition in the industry has yet to be determined by the law since two out of the five conditions for power industry competition have yet to be met. "Competition in the industry hasn't even started yet."

The two conditions are the 70 percent privatization of Napocor assets in Luzon and Visayas, and the appointment of an independent power producer administrator.

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5 senators launch Gloria resign movement

From page A1

GLORIA RESIGN!
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THAKSIN-INSPIRED SENATE: Senators Nene Pimentel, Frank Drilon, Jamby Madrigal, Ping Lacson and Jinggoy Estrada together with Senate employees launch the GMA Resign movement on Wednesday. ROGER MARGALLO

"All of the senators will agree to the proposal that GMA should resign so that we would have 'snap' elections. It's an appeal to her conscience, if she still has one, that she should resign for peace in the country," Pimentel said.

"The nation is paralyzed by a paranoid President, who sees nothing but the interest of her minions. This is our symbolic start of the nationwide campaign of the Gloria Resign movement," he said.

Public clamor

Pimentel said the President should have heeded public clamor and resigned ahead of Thaksin, in line with the Philippines' reputation as the most democratic country in Southeast Asia.

"I was hoping that she would do Thaksin better by resigning earlier, but now Thaksin put one over her, in a manner of speaking," Pimentel said.

"It is unfortunate because we are the No. 1 democratic country in this part of the world. And we are taking second place to Thailand," he said.

To emphasize their point, the senators put "Gloria Resign" stickers on their personal vehicles.

"We will bring the issues to the people, in the provinces and in the urban centers. Individual senators will get their assignments for that purpose, and we will start doing that during the break," Pimentel said.

"We're happy to note that this move is not only limited to senators. There are other civil society groups which I think will also announce their own way of doing this," he said.

Pimentel said he and the other senators were not afraid if the administration would decide to go after them.

"That's all right," he said. "We are daring the government to do its worst. What they want to do they should do. We will also do what we have to do."

United senators

Clad in a barong Tagalog and joined by his wife Mila, Drilon told the crowd of more than 100 that while senators had their differences, they were one in calling for Ms Arroyo's resignation.

"We are here to announce our true sentiments and the sentiments of millions of Filipinos who are suffering. This is our political statement in the Senate," Drilon said.

"This is one thing on which we're united. There are many issues that we disagree on, but when it comes to this, we're all united," he said.

Joking, Pimentel said he was "very sorry" that the microphone was not portable. He said he would have wanted to hold it while Drilon was speaking.

It was a reference to his having held the microphone for Ms Arroyo while she took her oath of office at the Edsa Shrine after the January 2001 "People Power" that put her in Malacañang.

Discernment

Said Lacson: "When another year is added to the life of a person, she should [start to] be discerning. This is the day that our beloved President should reflect and think not just about Gloria and company but also about God and country."

Estrada also sounded sarcastic: "First of all, I would like to greet with a happy birthday the fake President of our country, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Our personal birthday wish for her is [for her] to follow the sentiments of the majority of Filipinos and step down."

Pimentel said Ms Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro's resignation would be the "most peaceful" means of resolving the worsening political crisis.

"My point of view is that the Gloria Resign Movement, including Noli de Castro's resignation, will pave the way for a snap election, which I think is the most feasible manner of changing the leadership, because it does not need a new law," Pimentel said, adding:

"You do not [need] Charter change. It is already in the Constitution. And then it is peaceful. And also, if we are really minded to do it, by July we will have a new President because the duty of the acting President (Drilon being third in the line of succession) will be to preside over and conduct the election within 45 days.

"So, [if Ms. Arroyo resigns] now or in May, or June, it will be finished by July."

'People are the monarchy'

Other lawmakers called on Ms Arroyo to do a Thaksin.

"If you're asking for a birthday wish, perhaps the President can do a Thaksin," Bukidnon Rep. Nereus Acosta said in a press briefing of the Liberal Party at the Club Filipino in San Juan.

Acosta and Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II said the conditions for the President to quit were existing. But they expressed doubt that she would do so, pointing out that there was no "revered king" to advise her to make the crucial step.

Thaksin announced he would resign after meeting with Thailand's beloved monarch, Bhumibol Adulyadej, who is believed to have played a key role in the premier's decision.

"Conditions are largely the same if you seek and demand standards of accountability, legitimacy," said Acosta, who is married to a Thai professor actively engaged in "people power actions" in Thailand.

"Unfortunately for us, we don't have a constitutional monarchy that is revered as it is in Thailand. So the king spoke to Prime Minister Thaksin yesterday, and that was believed to be the tipping point for him..." Acosta said.

Roxas echoed this view, saying: "There are many similarities, but there are also many dissimilarities. The single dissimilarity is the presence of their king in Thailand that exerts a moderating influence, or establishes a righteous act for all to follow."

Acosta pointed out that a strong middle class and an increasingly activist academe demanding accountability from Thaksin—factors that he said were lacking in the Philippine context—contributed to the prime minister's decision.

But in a phone interview, Pimentel said Ms Arroyo had only to listen to the people and step down.

"We don't need a monarchy. We need the people. The people are the monarchy in a democracy," he said.

Higher standards

At the LP briefing, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said Thaksin's move only showed that he had "higher standards" than Ms Arroyo.

"What is Thaksin being accused of? Nonpayment of taxes ... This accusation of wrongdoing on the part of Thaksin pales in comparison with the kind of accusations hurled against our chief executive," Biazon said.

"We are looking at cheating in the election. We are looking at Northrail overpricing. We are looking at the fertilizer fund [scam]. We are looking at the Marcos money utilization, etc., ad infinitum," he said, adding:

"There seems to be a difference in the standards of legality, of morality, decency, delicadeza—name it. Maybe Thaksin has higher standards."

Birthday greetings

Expectedly, the House minority also let the President have it.

Minority Leader Francis Escudero said Ms Arroyo, who stood as godmother at his wedding, should learn lessons from the past so that the interest of the nation would prevail over hers.

He also said his birthday greeting to his *ninang* was truth, justice, freedom and peace.

Rep. Crispin Beltran of the party-list group Anakpawis was more forthright in saying that "if Thaksin can do it, GMA can."

"Do a Thaksin. Do a real sacrifice for the good of the Filipino people and step down, as Thaksin did yesterday," said Beltran, issuing the call from Camp Crame where he had been detained since Ms Arroyo declared a weeklong state of emergency on Feb. 24.

Beltran said his birthday wish for Ms Arroyo was for her to discern and reflect on her policies, which were "slowly tearing apart the fabric of the Philippine society."

He said Thaksin's resignation had taught everyone the lesson that "no head of state is indispensable and irreplaceable, if our government officials are indeed interested in upholding the welfare of the [people]." *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

'Pinoys feel situation here much brighter'

From page A1

greater optimism on the part of Filipinos than their counterparts in Thailand," he said.

He wished that Ms Arroyo would be appreciated by more Filipinos for what she was doing for the country. "The President has been working very hard for the stability and the economic progress of our country so that we could all move forward," he said.

At a briefing in Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the allegations against Ms Arroyo and Thaksin were different.

"(Thaksin's case) has something to do with graft and corruption or non-payment of taxes. The charges against the President came out only when the wiretapped conversation of the President [surfaced] and the discussion became broader. The President has legitimate mandate and she will serve until her time is up," Ermita said.

Opponents of Ms Arroyo accuse her of stealing the 2004 presidential election. She has denied any wrongdoing.

Mentor

Ermita said the President might have been an adherent of Thaksinomics (Thaksin's economic strategy that has propelled Thailand's economy to higher levels), but "it does not mean that she was bound to follow what her mentor did."

Not only does the Philippines and Thailand differ in political system, the former has no influential figure like Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who Ermita said was supposed to have a hand in Thaksin's decision to quit. *(Story on Page A1.)*

Ermita said the closest the Philippines had to an influential person like King Bhumibol was the late Jaime Cardinal Sin.

Ermita mentioned Cardinal Sin's role in gathering multitudes at Edsa in February 1986 that led to the ouster of President Ferdinand Marcos.

Asked if Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales could step into the shoes of the late Sin and exert a strong influence in Philippine politics, Ermita said: "I don't think so because the Pope's latest order to his clergy is to intervene less in politics."

A boost to Cha-cha

Claudio described as "predictable" the opposition's use of Thaksin's resignation as fodder for anti-Arroyo propaganda.

"But I don't think they will succeed because the situation here is totally different. Our people can feel just how much brighter the situation is in the country," he said.

Giving a positive spin to Thaksin's resignation, Claudio said the peaceful change in Thailand's leadership would boost the Arroyo administration's efforts to change the Constitution and shift to a parliamentary form of government.

Ermita was careful in talking about Thaksin's transgressions.

"I am careful whether to say these are true or not because he is a head of another country. And I don't think you can expect the President to say this or that (on Thaksin) because both are heads of state," he said.

Internal matter

Despite the political upheaval in Thailand, the Philippines' bilateral relations with the kingdom remain strong, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said the department would rather not comment on Thaksin's resignation. "That is an internal matter," Asuque said. *With a report from Nikko Dizon*

Highs and lows mark GMA's special day

From page A1

"If she is not trusted and loved by the people, and eight out of 10 Filipinos want her out, it's hard for her to govern."

But within minutes and facing a different set of reporters, Estrada backtracked and invoked etiquette when asked the same question.

"It's her birthday today and I'd rather reserve my comment as far as that is concerned," said Estrada, who himself will celebrate his 69th birthday on April 19.

"Let her celebrate a happy birthday," he added.

Don't spoil my mother's birthday celebration was the retort of Ms Arroyo's daughter Luli to a persistent reporter.

'See how happy we are'

The Presidential daughter flashed some of her mother's famous temper after she got peeved at the reporter for asking her father for his reaction to the revealing comments made by Ms Arroyo's half sister, Cielo Macapagal-Salgado, on the First Couple's "yin and yang" partnership.

"You can see how happy we are in this celebration, just stop it," said Luli Arroyo.

She spoke in a stern voice while being escorted by her security personnel out of the St. Augustine church in Lubao, Pampanga, after hearing Mass in honor of her mother.

One of her escorts even chimed in to berate the reporter.

Luli blew her fuse when the reporter repeatedly asked First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo for comments on Salgado's remarks published in the INQUIRER Wednesday.

The First Gentleman calmly replied "no comment" when asked if he felt Salgado's revelations were accurate and whether his family would reconcile with Salgado.

The reporter asked Luli Arroyo if she felt there was anything wrong with the questions. She said: "Yes. It's the way that you're provoking him."

Let him be

The First Gentleman, who was walking with the crowd, looked back at her daughter and told her: "Child, let him be."

The Presidential daughter's outburst was surprising. A few minutes earlier, she followed her father's order to field the reporters' questions.

Asked if the family resented the President's half sister, Luli said: "No. For us, we've always respected Tita Cielo so we cannot do anything about it. That's how we are, we're always open and we always respected her and her family no matter what they've said about us."

The President's daughter has been known to be hostile to reporters, believing that media have been unfair to her mother.

But the President also got two major gifts and appeared elated.

"For your birthday," was how she quoted Speaker Jose de Venecia as telling her about Tuesday night's approval of the P1.3 trillion national budget and the antiterrorism bill.

De Venecia said he was confident that the Senate would approve these bills by the end of April.

Ms Arroyo, who spoke at the end of the Mass concelebrated by a dozen priests at the centuries-old St. Augustine Church in Lubao, said she received text messages from legislators who told her that the bills were their gifts to her.

She gave out her own presents, announcing at the church that she has ordered the release of P500 million for the insurance of poor Filipinos through the state-run PhilHealth.

She said P700 million had been allotted for the purchase of cheaper imported medicines to be sold in 5,000 "Botika ng Bayan" outlets nationwide.

She also fulfilled a promise to San Fernando Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, the chair of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' commission on family and life, when she announced the allotment of P30 million for the government's natural family planning program.

Ms Arroyo also brimmed with excitement as she shared Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano's report that tourist arrivals in the country have gone up by 11.9 percent, saying it was the biggest in history.

BLESSED ARE THE CHILDREN of Hospicio de San Jose who get to spend part of the President's special day with her. REM ZAMORA

Tourism, she said, has become the country's second job-drawing sector, after call centers.

Time for political changes

She said it was time now to pursue political changes because the important economic reforms are now in place.

She endorsed the shift to a parliamentary system of government, saying that under this reform, "laws could be passed immediately and implemented fast."

Without giving figures, she congratulated officials in Pampanga's second district for contributing a large chunk of signatures for the people's initiative.

Her eldest son, Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, who represents the district, and Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda denied reports that deceit, bribery and force were used in the solicitation of signatures to push constitutional changes. *With reports from Volt Contreras, Christine O. Avendano and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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SC prodded on EO 464

By Philip C. Tubeza

SEN. JOKER ARROYO says the Supreme Court should now rule on petitions questioning the constitutionality of some of President Macapagal-Arroyo's orders, saying she could deprive Filipinos of their freedom by simply issuing presidential orders and proclamations.

A veteran of the human rights struggle under the Marcos dictatorship, Arroyo says he feels frustrated by the high court's failure to rule specifically on the constitutionality of Executive Order 464, which he says has virtually done away with the system of checks and balances in the government.

"The fate and the future of the country is in the hands of the Supreme Court," Arroyo told reporters during a news briefing last Tuesday after a Senate sub-committee released a report condemning the administration crackdown on media at the height of the state of national emergency last February.

For so long

"For so long as 464 is there, we can make any report, we can make any harsh report, (but) it amounts to nothing. That's why this has to be resolved, if we still have some semblance of a constitutional government," Arroyo said.

"In other words, the President has succeeded in short-circuiting what the Senate can do, but let's see," he said. He described the situation as one that "makes your blood boil."

Arroyo said it was necessary for the Supreme Court to resolve questions raised by various groups on the constitutionality of EO 464 as well as Presidential Proclamation 1017 declaring last February's state of national emergency to defuse the current political crisis.

At a standstill

"The country is in a standstill because there is no definitive ruling on (these) constitutional questions," Arroyo said. "The country cannot be paralyzed with this. The President issues an (executive order), issues a proclamation and she practically handcuffs us," he added.

"I have gone through martial law, from the beginning, (but) I cannot understand what is happening (now). Why even this people's initiative has gone this far," Arroyo said. He was referring to Malacañang-endorsed moves to amend the Constitution which he said raised additional questions that would likely be brought to the Supreme Court.

But for the moment, Arroyo said he wished the constitutionality of EO 464 which bars government officials from attending congressional hearings with Ms Arroyo's prior approval, would be resolved.

"We cannot have any investigation now," he said. "I just had a hearing on franchises. (National Telecommunications Commission) Commissioner (Rolando) Solis did not even attend. It's 464. A simple application for a franchise, but 464 is invoked."

CPR on the way out of legal jargon

By Armand Nocum

THE CALIBRATED preemptive response (CPR) may be out soon if only from the legal jargon.

Appearing during oral arguments on petitions questioning the constitutionality of the "no-permit, no rally" policy of the administration, Solicitor-General Eduardo Antonio Nachura said the Palace would consider removing CPR from its vocabulary.

He was reacting to Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban's suggestion that the Palace could free itself from all the troubles arising from CPR, which he described as "vague and incomprehensible"—if it stops using the phrase.

"You wouldn't mind if this CPR is removed from the vocabulary of lawyers and CPR is not in the wordings of the law as you pointed out, it is just a catchphrase," Panganiban told Nachura during an interpellation of the CPR during yesterday's oral arguments.

Towards the end of the oral arguments late Thursday night, Panganiban also described CPR as having caused confusion and misunderstanding and as having been "used and abused" by the police in suppressing rallies.

Nachura readily accepted Panganiban's suggestion to strike down the CPR policy saying that it is merely a "catchphrase" and not covered by any law.

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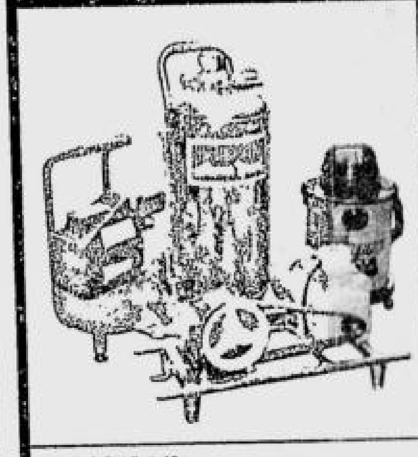

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Such an attribution is inaccurate and has no basis in fact.

The Magic Sing Videoke Microphone was invented by Mr. K. H. Lee, president of Enter Tech Co., Ltd. of Korea, several years before the undersigned became involved in its distribution in 2001. In fact, the product was already being marketed in Korea and Japan before it was introduced in the Philippines.

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PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR
No. 11, s-2006

TO : ALL ACCREDITED OUT-PATIENT CLINICS AND ALL CONCERNED

SUBJECT : Guidelines on the Renewal of Accreditation of Out-Patient Clinics

The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the National Health Insurance Act as amended defines out-patient clinic as an institution or facility with a basic team providing health services such as diagnostic consultation, examination, treatment, surgery and rehabilitation on an out-patient basis (Section 3.00). These facilities include the following:

1. Rural Health Units (RHUs)/Health Centers (HCs);
2. Maternity Care Clinics (MCCs);
3. Freestanding Dialysis Clinics (FDCs); and
4. Directly Observed Treatment Shortcourse (DOTS) Clinics.

Currently, the expiration of accreditation of the aforesaid is on the anniversary date. However, in order to facilitate the orderly processing of applications in all regions before the expiration of their accreditation, these guidelines are issued:

1. The new schedule of filing shall be as follows:

A. Group I

Regions	Filing Period	Period of Validity
IV A, IV B, V and VI	January 1 to 31	April 30 of the current year to April 29 of the succeeding year
NCR and Rizal	February 1 to 28	May 31 of the current year to May 30 of the succeeding year
I, II, III and CAR	March 1 to 31	June 30 of the current year to June 29 of the succeeding year

B. Group II

Regions	Filing Period	Period of Validity
VII and VIII	May 1 to 31	August 31 of the current year to August 30 of the succeeding year
IX, X, XI, XII and CARAGA	October 1 to 31	January 31 of the succeeding year to January 30 of the next succeeding year

2. All out-patient clinics in Group II whose applications for renewal of accreditation were approved from February 1 to April 30 of the current year (2006) need not file a new application for the year 2006. It shall apply for renewal during the scheduled filing period of the concerned region in year 2007.
3. Out-patient clinics in both groups which were recently inspected and approved for **initial or re-accreditation** and whose validity period for the region will expire within three (3) months should submit the application for renewal of accreditation and pay the appropriate fee for the ensuing renewal period.

To illustrate: An RHU in Region VII is applying for initial accreditation

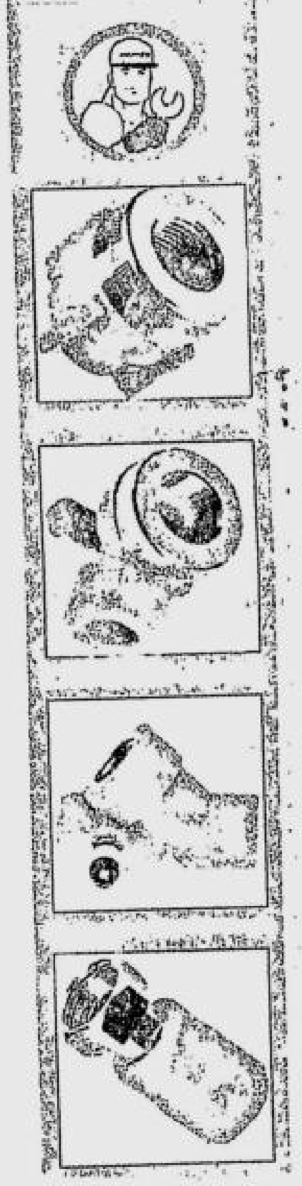
Date of Inspection	Date of Approval	Validity Period (for initial accreditation)	Filing Period for Renewal (for the region)	Validity Period (for renewal of accreditation)
June 02, 2006	June 17, 2006	June 17, 2006 to June 16, 2007	May 1 to 31, 2006	August 31, 2006 to August 30, 2007

4. The validity of accreditation takes effect on the date recommended or as determined by the Accreditation Committee and approved by the President & CEO.
5. Capitation fund for the out-patient consultation and diagnostics utilizing the diagnostic package and claims for payment of the maternity, TB DOTS and dialysis packages which are filed before the effectivity date of accreditation shall be automatically denied payment.
6. If the application for renewal is submitted within the new schedule of filing period per region, the accreditation privileges of the institutional health care provider/s shall be considered and shall not be attended by a gap notwithstanding the actual date of approval of the application for renewal.
7. The discount on renewal fees for the accreditation of out-patient clinics shall be granted to early filers starting this year.

This circular shall take effect after fifteen days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

(Sgd.) LORNA O. FAJARDO, CESO III
Officer-in-charge
Office of the President & CEO

Date Signed: March 22, 2006



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4 US soldiers donate rare blood type to save little Frail

From page A1

type—A-negative. Normally, this is found mostly in Caucasians.

Unable to find an appropriate donor, Frail's family had planned to take her out of the Zamboanga hospital.

"They were going to take the girl back home the next day to let her die because they weren't able to find a compatible donor," said US Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Frank W. Thompson.

US humanitarian mission

Thompson, who belongs to the US Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) conducting humanitarian missions in Mindanao, reported to the US Embassy that one of Frail's physicians, Dr. Ben Caranay, with help from local journalists, decided to approach the task force.

The medical team scanned its personnel database. Within minutes, the team identified four US servicemen with the correct blood type. They were Army Sgt. Michael K. Light, Marine Cpl. David Bombard, Master at Arms 1st Class Jeffrey Simpson, and Army Sgt. Major Robert Saiz.

"When the four donors arrived at the Zamboanga City Medical Center to give their much-needed donation, they found 12 Filipino hospital staff members waiting earnestly," a US Embassy report said.

Blood donation amid a huge fire

"Before drawing blood, they met Frail in her hospital bed. She sat attached to an IV tube and suffering from one of the weekly intense fevers that are symptoms of typhoid fever, not even able to comprehend what was occurring," the embassy said.

The four servicemen each donated 450 cubic centimeters of A-negative blood on March 23, the day that Zamboanga City saw the biggest fire to raze the area and displace thousands of families.

Thompson praised the Filipino hospital staff for a "wonderful job at making sure the donors were as comfortable as possible."

"I have a 2-month-old son at home," said Simpson, one of the donors who's a 28-year-old native of Bards, Kentucky.

"I just thought about (Frail) while donating and if the situation was reversed, I would want someone to do the same thing for (my son)," Simpson said.

Going home to recover

Caranay said that the transfusion "was successful but they will know much more about the child's progress in four to 10 days."

Light, one of the donors, also said he and other JSOTF-P members regularly visit a local orphanage.

The soldiers play with the children and bring donations from the US military in the Philippines.

"It will be these little things that I remember most about being here," Light said.

Because the "little things" the servicemen are doing include donating blood, little Frail will soon be going home to recover.

Poisoning shocks best, brightest in science school

From page A1

Kidney and Transplant Institute for more than a month, according to a relative of the girl. But she was able to graduate.

Police said a chemical analysis of the water in the jug had indicated the presence of silver nitrate, a poisonous, colorless crystalline compound used in manufacturing photographic film, silvering mirrors, dyeing hair and plating silver.

It is also used as an antiseptic, and dropped into the eyes of newborn babies.

Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Criminal Investigation and Detection Division, said the case of frustrated homicide was filed in March at the Quezon City Prosecutor's office.

De los Santos said three of the boy's classmates had submitted sworn statements "stating how he placed toxin in the water jug of a classmate."

Police said the girl who had drunk from the jug was not its owner.

Preliminary probe

The parents of both the boy and the girl and their respective lawyers met on Tuesday at the Quezon City Fiscal's Office for the preliminary investigation, according to Prosecutor Ferdinand Bayhon.

"The case has started," Bayhon said, adding that the boy's camp had until May 3 to submit a counter-affidavit.

A preliminary investigation is conducted to determine whether there is probable cause to take a case to court.

Because the accused is a minor, the trial will determine if he acted "with discernment."

The law states that only children below 9 years of age are exempt from criminal liability.

Commenting on a report in another paper that the PSHS had not allowed the boy to graduate, De los Santos noted that the latter had denied the accusation.

"He is presumed innocent until proven guilty. He is not yet convicted, and being accused of a crime does not bar you from pursuing education," De los Santos said.

But he conceded that a school had its own internal rules barring a student from graduating without a certificate of good moral standing.

Bailable offense

Frustrated homicide is a bailable offense, De los Santos said. If the case is taken to court and an arrest warrant is issued, the boy will be put in the care of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

If the boy is convicted, his lawyer may ask the court to suspend the sentence until after he reaches 21, the "age of maturity."

Asked to explain what could prompt any student to poison someone's water, De los Santos said: "Children have a different appreciation of what is good or bad. Sometimes they think it's all play."

He said the unfortunate thing was that a student had been seriously hurt, and the future of another had become uncertain.

Witnesses' accounts

According to a PSHS report dated Feb. 14, it was the girl's friends who informed the school authorities that something was wrong.

"She was then brought to the medical clinic where initial inquiry revealed that while drinking the water from the jug, there was a burning sensation in her mouth and throat followed by severe abdominal pain and vomiting," said the report signed by the PSHS physician.

This was how a witness narrated the events to police:

Between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Feb. 14, the witness, the boy, and two other students were at the school lobby.

"We were just talking ... about different things until he said, 'Let's put some.'"

The boy got the water jug of a female student and told the witness to open it.

"While [I was] opening [the jug], he got a bottle from his bag. He opened the bottle and poured its contents [into] the jug..."

A second witness said it was either the first witness or the boy who had gotten the jug:

"I'm also not sure who between them poured the contents of the bottle [into] the jug because at that time I was doing something.

"At around 6 p.m. [the boy] talked to me and told me that I should not say anything about what happened earlier because he does not want the investigation to be misled [and] because he is innocent ...

"I asked him what they placed in [the jug], and he told me it was just water."

A third witness told a similar story, saying he saw the boy take out what appeared to be a bottle from his bag, and pour its contents into the jug.

Bright future

The family of the 16-year-old girl is afraid that the incident would cloud her bright future, including studies at the University of the Philippines.

"That's where she wants to be," a relative told the INQUIRER in a brief interview at the family residence in Barangay Punturin, Valenzuela.

He begged not to be named, invoking the incident's sensitive nature.

The girl was all set for college life and a successful career in the sciences until she drank the poisoned water, the relative said.

"She looks fine now, but we'll never really know if the substance won't bother her anymore. That's what we're afraid of—the long-term effects on her life," he said.

From accounts, she's one bright girl.

She was a consistent honor student in grade school at a Catholic institution in Quezon City. Her performance was no different at the PSHS.

The relative credited the honors to the girl's focus and determination.

Friends said that at any given time, she could be found in either of only two places: her school or her home.

A neighbor said the girl could hardly be seen in the neighborhood because she was often preoccupied with school work.

"She doesn't go out often," the neighbor told the INQUIRER. "She's very quiet."

And she did not resent the seemingly rigid lifestyle, knowing that education was more important than the many temptations of youth, the relative said.

Donations pour in

The crime has elicited not only shock and indignation but also goodwill from the PSHS community.

Students, teachers, staff, school officials, parents and alumni took it upon themselves to help in the girl's recovery.

"Assistance has been coming in the form of monetary donations, blood donations, [even] flowers, balloons, cards; and, of course, prayers..." said an official bulletin on her case posted on the Internet.

As of March 24, the student body has collected donations amounting to P174,000, said the bulletin issued by PSHS officer in charge Jessamyn Yazon.

The school also organized two fund-raising activities for the girl's recovery: a concert and an art exhibit/sale.

But the bulletin had a sobering footnote: "As the donations increase, however, the medical bills continue to escalate. Future medical checkups and treatments, and laboratory tests are also anticipated."

The bulletin assured the PSHS community of the school's "unrelenting efforts to enforce its rules, to seek out the truth, and to serve the cause of justice."

"The discipline case aspect of her case went through all the required school-level committee deliberations (from the Fact-Finding Team to the Discipline Committee to the Management Committee to the Executive Committee," it said, adding:

"Last March 4, the reports and recommendations of these committees were submitted to the Board of Trustees (BOT), the school's governing body. In a meeting held last March 6, where the discipline case was in the agenda, the BOT reached a decision."

The bulletin did not state what decision was reached, but said it was formalized into a resolution, with copies given to all those concerned. *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra and DJ Yap*

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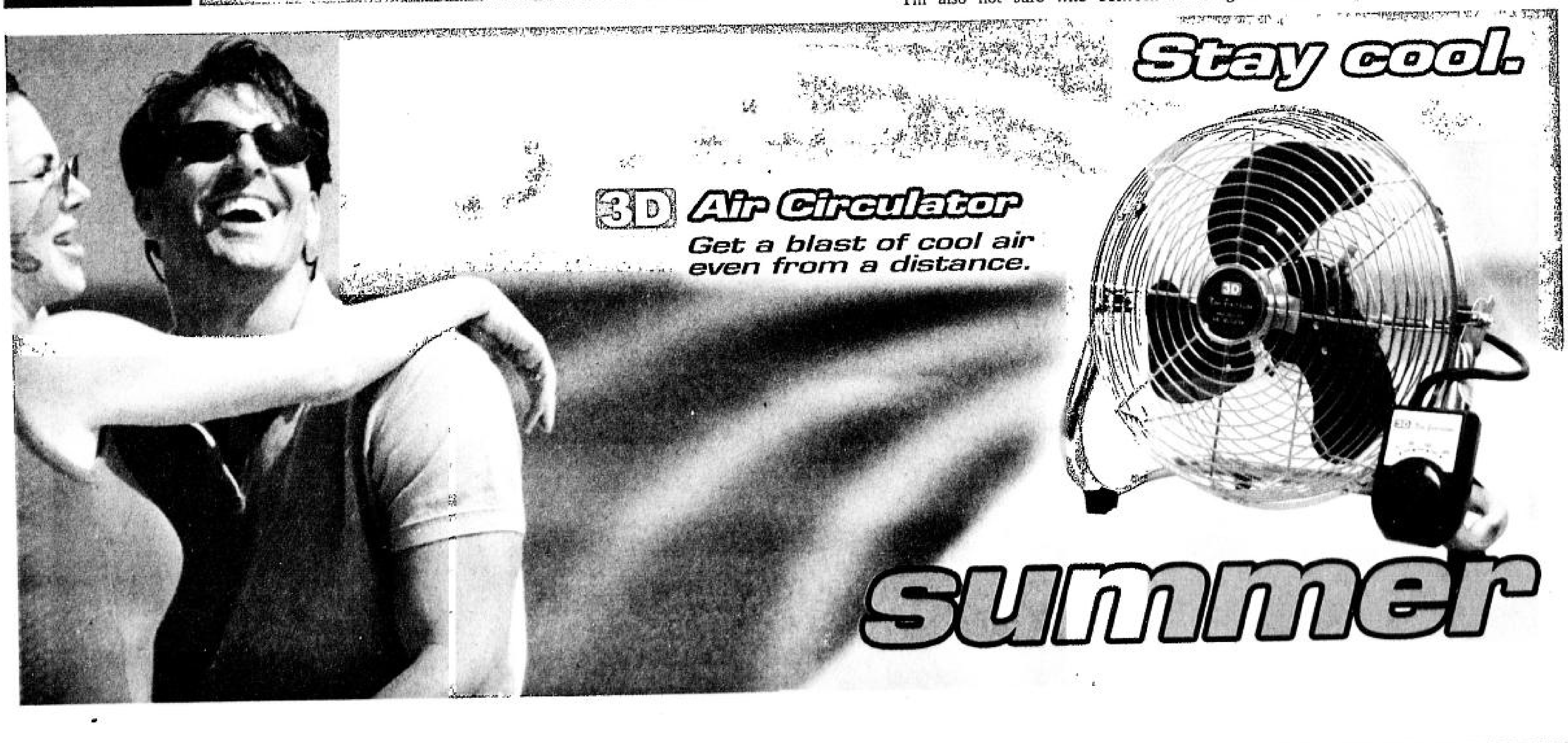

Pinoys won P78M in claims vs Taiwan employers in '05

FILIPINO WORKERS in Taiwan were granted some P78 million (NT$50 million or) worth of claims against their brokers and employers with the assistance of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO), the country's official representative based in Taipei.

Meco reported in a press statement that the amount represented the workers' unpaid wages, illegal deductions, tax refunds, excessive fees, savings, and labor insurance benefits in 2005 alone.

Meco Labor Taipei, which is responsible for northern Taiwan, netted the biggest collection last year, helping Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) recover NT$19.38 million (P30.42 million) in monetary claims. More than 60,000 of 92,000 Filipinos working in Taiwan are based in the area.

Meco said its offices in Taichung and Kaohsiung helped OFWs recover NT$13.86 million (P21.76 million) and NT$16.30 million (P25.59 million) in financial claims, respectively.

The data excluded successful cases assisted by the agency but did not involve monetary claims or financial settlements.

"This is just one aspect of the services that we are extending to our OFWs," said Antonio Basilio, managing director and resident representative of Meco. "Our OFWs are toiling day in and day out to make a decent living, and that sum represented not just their hard-earned wages but (also) the sacrifices that they had made for their families. The least that we could do is to help them get their money back, and to remain vigilant in safeguarding their rights."

Some OFWs have thanked the Meco for its action. An OFW identified only as Nina wrote Meco Kaohsiung labor representative Elizabeth Recio, expressing gratitude to Meco "for promptly acting on my complaint, and for standing up to my broker who wanted to collect illegal fees from me."

Another OFW named Mabel recovered more than NT$50,000 (P78,500) in tax refund, excessive fees and leave benefits with Meco's assistance, the press statement said.

"Today, I (got my refund)," Mabel was quoted in her letter to Recio. "Hopefully, I will be going home soon."

The Meco labor center in Taipei handled the most number of cases in the fourth quarter of 2005, recovering NT$6.92 million (P10.86 million) in monetary claims. In the first three quarters last year, the center recovered NT$2.36 million (P3.71 million), NT$6.04 million (P9.48 million), and NT$4.05 million (P6.36 million) in financial claims.

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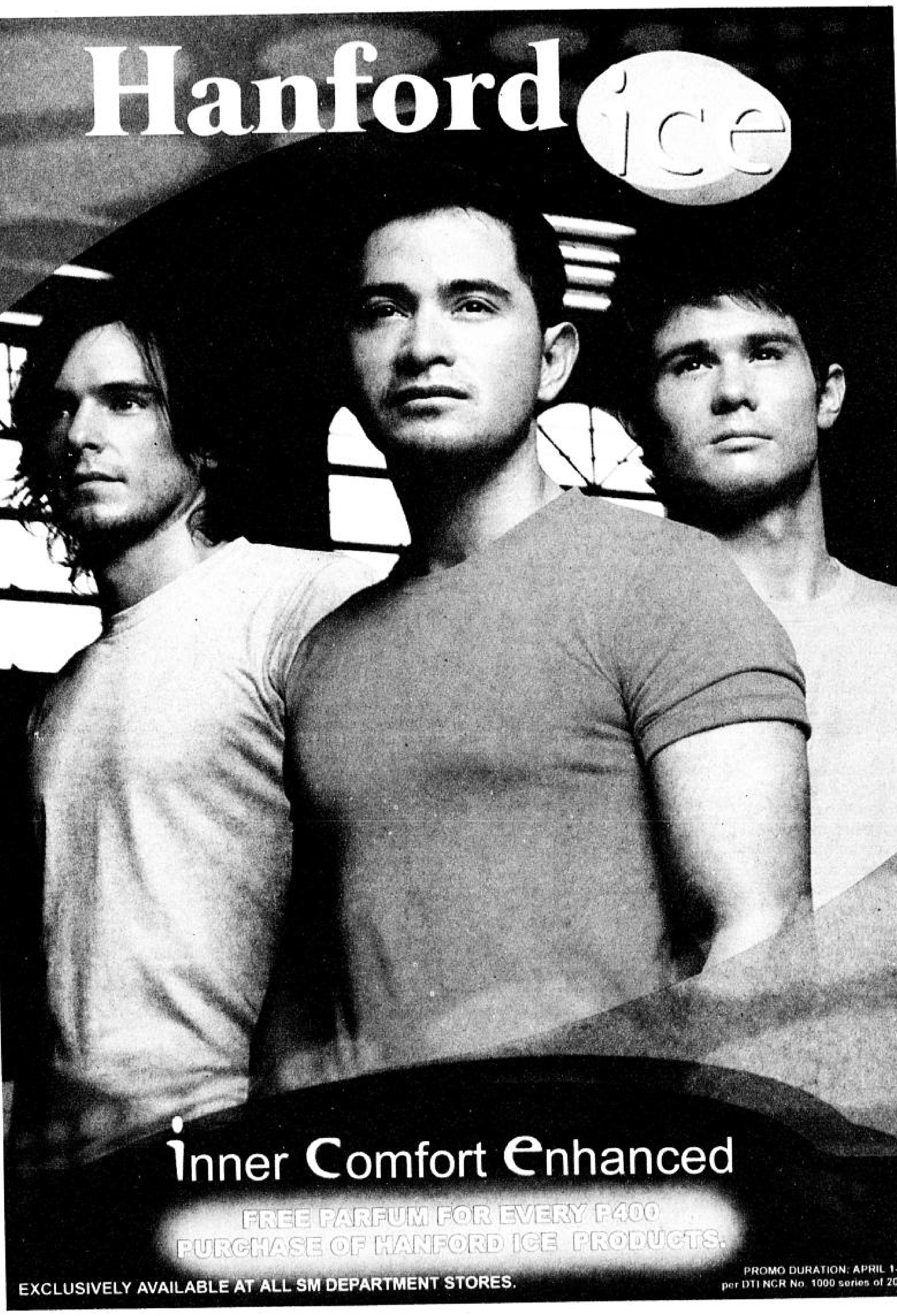
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OPINION

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Term limits

EDITORIAL

THERE SEEMS TO HAVE EVOLVED A PUBLIC DEbate on insulating the military from politics by fixing the term of the chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The discussion is timely inasmuch as warring partisans in the political sphere seem to have made it a point to press their case even at the risk of compromising the loyalty of the military. Even President Macapagal-Arroyo, who has always called on the military and the police to defend her against riotous challenges to her legitimacy, believes that the proposal is worth looking into. Her spokesperson said "a fixed term will serve the interest of the organization and its mission" while instilling in the AFP and the police "professionalism and redirect these two important agencies away from politics."

We should press the issue further. If the objective is to shield the AFP from politics, more should be done. For example, there should be a more objective, less politics-prone system of choosing the major service commanders in the AFP. A more rationalized system would also mean that the President as commander in chief would limit appointments to the chief of staff and the commanders of the major services, and leave to them the discretion to appoint subordinates, perhaps in consultation with the Office of the President.

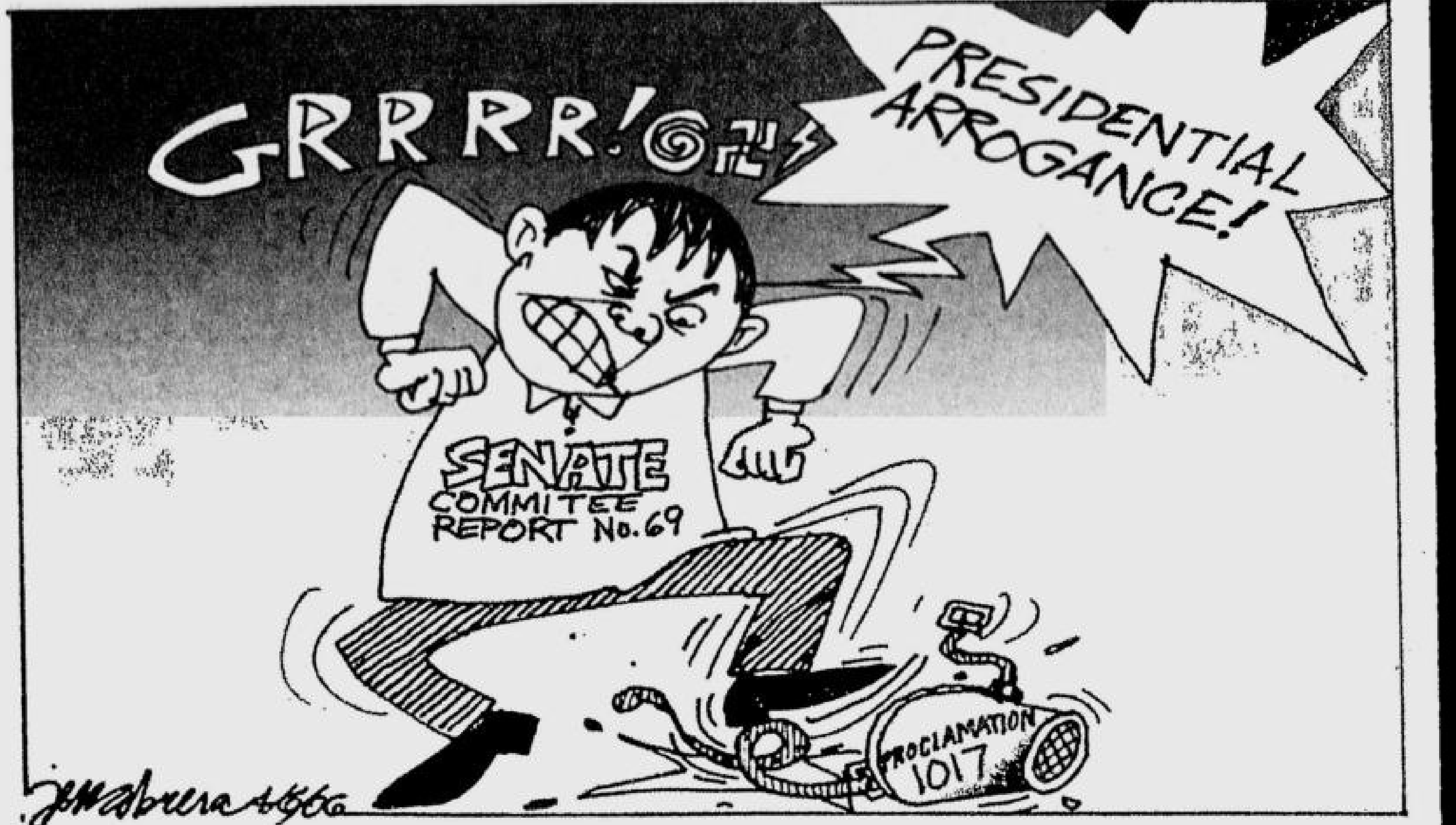
Confining presidential appointments to the major services would also mean a more rationalized role for Congress in screening nominees in the Commission on Appointments, thus lessening the politicization of the military. As it is, even mid-level officers from the rank of colonel are subject to presidential appointment and CA confirmation. The process makes military officers prey to the partisan wiles and parochial caprices of politicians, as is quite often shamefully evident in commission hearings. Congressional oversight of the military may continue through the regular budget and special closed-door intelligence hearings.

There's more that can be done to hasten the depoliticization of the military. One would be to uphold civilian supremacy at all times, so that the President should avoid appointing retired military officers to civilian positions. The appointment of retired officers not only waters down civilian supremacy, it also casts doubts on appointments in the military. For how could military appointments be professionalized and depoliticized if those who have just retired from the service are appointed to civilian positions, thus making it appear that military loyalty is rewarded with plum civilian positions, which are often the spoils of political contests?

In fact, the Davide Commission that investigated the 1989 coup attempt recommended that certain defense and military positions be given to civilians so that "the supremacy of civilian authority over the military should be established." Aside from the defense secretary, the commission recommended that the leadership of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency be headed by a civilian. The commission underscored the "need for an independent and civilian-controlled intelligence network responsible directly to the President."

It is interesting to note that the Davide Commission also recommended the "institutionalization of necessary improvements in the military in the areas of promotion and assignments." Moreover, it declared that "the President and the Commission on Appointments must work out a system by which recommendations for promotions can be categorized in practice to avoid the exploitation of the confirmation process for political purposes." While conceding that the chief of staff and the top positions in the major service commands "have a political dimension which requires the exhaustive inquiry by the CA in the proper exercise of checks and balances," the commission said other appointments "might merit a progressively different treatment based on institutional courtesy."

And why not also have term limits for graft-prone positions in the military? The Feliciano Commission that investigated the 2003 coup attempt, in fact, recommended that limits be set for the tenure of AFP finance and procurement officers. It suggested that the terms of AFP comptrollers, logistics officers, procurement and special disbursement officers be limited to a "maximum" of four years. Considering the case of Maj. Gen. (ret.) Carlos Garcia, who seemed to have enjoyed a life term as AFP comptroller until several cases of corruption were uncovered against him and his family, the suggestion is sound.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'Uncooked grain'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"HE WHO COOKS RICE HURRIEDLY MUST swallow half-cooked grain," warns a Visayan proverb.

But Speaker Jose de Venecia has no time for folk wisdom. The "people's initiative" should be rushed, he insists, so a parliamentary system is welded in place, come July 15.

"Impossible," snapped Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra. The Commission on Elections needs six months' lead time to prepare for a nationwide plebiscite. And that doesn't include time for verifying hastily corralled signatures of registered voters.

The Comelec would need P3.6 billion for the whole drill, Borra added. And there's no budget provision for such a forced march.

Malacañang minions, however, signal that "contingency funds"—flush with our E-VAT shekels—could be siphoned.

Why are we being stampeded?

"I thought Cha-cha was a dance," our cook said before dinner. "Now, they tell me it's about the Constitution."

Today, we're being badgered to shred the 1987 Constitution. If "stagnation and decay" are to end, President Macapagal-Arroyo and her allies insist, we must write a new one, like yesterday. Wasn't heeding the present Constitution more important than rewriting it? our cook wondered.

This thrust has morphed into the ongoing "people's initiative." Gathering signatures to amend the Constitution, the President told the Philippine Development Forum, reflects the "true power of the people." Shifting to a parliamentary form would ensure governance that is more responsive to people's hopes.

Madame's hopes gloss over formidable legal barriers and history. Over the last 200 years, only piece-meal but basic amendments were stitched into the US Constitution. The First Amendment, for example, safeguards freedom of expression. The Fifth provides a shield against self-incrimination (copiously availed of by former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano).

The British don't have a written constitution. They never had one, but their unwritten Charter extends throughout their realm, albeit shrunken in today's post-empire era.

In contrast, we painstakingly scribble out our constitutions, from Malolos to Edsa. Often, they're honored more in the breach than in the practice. And our transient "leaders" prod us to rewrite them to suit their equally transient plans.

People power scrapped Ferdinand Marcos' constitution that ensured his perpetual stay in power. Protests in 1997 stopped President Fidel Ramos who tried to harness Congress, as a constituent assembly, to overhaul the Charter—and lift the cap on their terms of office.

Constitutional experts, like Ateneo's Fr. Joaquin Bernas, have stressed that the Supreme Court has ruled that Republic Act 6735 falls short of being the enabling law needed to anchor the current signature campaign. RA 6735 "is incomplete, inadequate or wanting in essential terms insofar as initiatives on amendments to the Constitution is concerned," Chief Justice Hilario Davide wrote on behalf of the Court. Its gaps on "substantive matters are fatal." They cannot be massaged into life by rules and regulations.

Until Congress passes an enabling law, today's people's initiative is, as the Thai proverb says, "writing in water." Furthermore, the Constitution limits people's initiative to specific amendments, not overall revision, like cloning an undefined parliamentary system.

But are the President, the Speaker et al. listening? *Walang bingi dito sa mundo, gaya ng ayaw makinig*(There are none so deaf in this world as those who refuse to hear).

So, where's this "fire in the belly" for constitutional blue-penciling coming from?

Look at what's on the shelf. In the draft charter that the Malacañang-backed Constitutional Consultative Commission proposed, Article XX forms the "Transitory Provisions." Section 7 cancels the 2007 election. This is the infamous "no-el" provision. (Chair Jose Abueva and 18 others were voted down by 22 members.)

Congressmen and affected officials, would coast, unelected, to June 30, 2010. Even vociferous party-list representatives have zippered their lips. They'd get three more years of public-subsidized terms and perks, like immunity from arrest, to press for their dictatorship of the proletariat.

Other provisions allow the President to appoint 30 persons to serve in the unelected parliament. The prime minister is not the head of the party, as in a normal parliamentary system. All powers of the prime minister and his Cabinet will be subject to the President who will retain her post until 2010.

These would enable a savage few to cling to position, perks and pork. Old injustices, like half-cooked grain, would be served on the platter of a "new" system. Make no mistake, this is a con game, played as that old shyster Ferdinand Marcos did.

A constitution enshrines a people's permanent values and hopes. It should be revised in a setting devoid of political passion. That climate does not exist today.

"A society in which men recognize no check upon their freedom soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few, as we have learned to our sorrow," Justice Learned Hand said in a 1944 address. "I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes, believe me. These are false hopes."

"Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women," he went on to say. "When it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it… While it lies there, it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it."

***

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Tale of two cities

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

YOU WONDER WHY THE THAIS HAVE GOTTEN ahead in life, regarded the world over as a tiger of Asia, while we're groveling in dirt, regarded the world over as the retard of Asia? Wonder no more. Thaksin Shinawatra has just shown so.

In a dazzling move last Tuesday, Thaksin resigned his post as prime minister of Thailand. He had earlier said he would resign only if his party lost more than 50 percent of the vote. It did not: it won 54 percent of the vote. But despite this, in the face of widespread calls for him to step down and after meeting with King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Thaksin announced his resignation. His statement was a classic in thinking of the nation first before oneself, notwithstanding that it was forced on him:

"I am sorry that I will not accept the premier post. I apologize to my 16 million supporters that I cannot take the post of prime minister, but I will still carry on as a caretaker prime minister until my successor is chosen. My reason for not accepting the post of prime minister is because this year is an auspicious year for the King, whose 60th anniversary on the throne is just 60 days away. I beg all Thais to sacrifice for the King. We have no time to quarrel. I want to see Thai people unite and forget what has happened."

That should be put side by side in declamation contests with Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's apology last year for having cheated in the 2004 elections.

In one fell swoop, Thaksin refutes some of the most humongous idiocies ever to have been conceived by the human brain that have been circulating in this country over the past several months. Chief of them is that we have to forget morality and think only of the economy to advance in life. We need to forget that GMA cheated in the elections and remember only that beggars cannot be choosers. We need to forget about right and wrong and think only about Pacquiao and Cha-cha.

Well, people who think that way would be lucky to end up in the cabbage patch of life. It isn't true at all that you cannot eat pride, dignity and self-respect. They're in fact the only things you can eat, or that allow you to eat. You have no pride, you have no dignity, you have no self-respect, you'll just be snarling like a dog fighting other snarling dogs to get to a scrap of meat someone has left behind.

As it is, Thaksin is accused only of corruption, which stands on arguable evidence. GMA is accused of wrecking the one thing that sustains democracy in whatever form, shape or size it manifests itself, which is (reasonably) clean elections, and which stands on unassailable proof. Yet Thaksin has resigned and spared his party and country the harm his continued stay would entail. GMA has not, and doesn't mind perverting everything this country holds sacred, including the minds of its children, just so she can cling to power. There and then you see why Thailand is up there and we're down here. They're a class act, we're a dwarf act.

Yet another idiocy Thaksin refutes is that the answer to a president having stolen the vote is to change the Constitution. You commit a crime against the country, you do not punish the country, the country punishes you. Or, as Thaksin shows, you punish yourself.

While at this, what Thaksin shows and what the Cha-cha proponents fail to point out is that a parliamentary system is premised on one thing, which is that the people running it have some sense of decency. Or never mind decency, have some shame left in them. The term of office of a prime minister is contingent on the people's confidence: Their vote of confidence is lost, the prime minister is lost. But you have a leader who has no sense of decency, or, never mind decency, some shred of shame, who will stick to a position like a leech however universally detested she is, her nails scraping the throne as she is being pried loose from it, no amount of parliamentary—or presidential, or plain human—recourse will help. Only kerosene, which has been known to remove chewing gum stuck in a shoe, will help. Or its political equivalent.

I've been saying it these past months: What is the solution to the problem of someone having stolen the elections? Oust her and hold new (and clean) elections. Of course, that will not solve all our problems, any more than removing a fish bone stuck in your throat will make you the healthiest man in the world. But try getting through the day with a fish bone stuck in your throat or, in this case, a needle stuck in your tonsils. We remove GMA (if she cannot be persuaded to resign) and hold elections, we will do more than breathe a sigh of relief. We will rekindle the hope that things will be better, a hope that is being snuffed out, if it has not been extinguished already, in the heart of this once great nation.

Which brings us finally to the biggest idiocy Thaksin refutes: That is that any people, rich or poor, black or white, short or tall, can unite on the basis of wrongdoing. That is what GMA has been calling for all this time: for Filipinos to sacrifice for the country, for everyone to stop squabbling, for the people to unite and move the country forward. That is easy, as I suggested the other day in the column about having a dream, which seems to have struck a chord with readers. GMA wants to see Filipinos stop squabbling, unite and sacrifice for the nation? She should resign.

Thaksin has, and by so doing, he has given the Thais a solid platform from which to come together and build a stronger nation. GMA has not, and managed only to fulfill her own prediction that if she ran again—and won by cheating—she would plunge the country into never-ending divisiveness.

It's the tale of two cities. One has *hiya*, the other has *walang hiya*. The one has a future, the other doesn't even have a present.

Hostage to Congress

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT HERMENIGILDO Estrella Jr. testified before a Senate committee that the camp of President Macapagal-Arroyo allegedly indulged in a lot of cheating in the May 2004 elections. Estrella asserted that at some point during the counting, Fernando Poe Jr. would have begun to emerge as winner had it not been for vote-padding for GMA. Among the places he cited for fraud was Cebu.

But the ballots from Cebu are being examined for months now by the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, composed of Supreme Court justices, due to the electoral protest of Loren Legarda against Vice President Noli de Castro. The revision of the Cebu votes is 58 percent finished, according to De Castro's lawyer Romeo Macalintal (also GMA's lawyer), and so far, there has been no significant departure from the trend for GMA, who won 1.02 million votes there. Where does this leave the claim of Estrella about vote-padding in Cebu?

* * *

Who is Estrella? I admit to having been a bit shocked to read about his testimony, since I have met him in another capacity. For weeks now, some members of the board of Alay sa Kawal (ASK) Foundation, led by president Ramon Pedrosa, have been meeting with Estrella and others in the real estate business. Estrella's group had submitted a proposal to involve ASK in the development of an enlisted men's village in Taguig, knowing of our 20-year involvement in promoting the soldiers' welfare. He has been closely associated with Pedrosa and is said to be a management systems advisor, specializing in management engineering, project development and management training. But I don't see in his impressive credentials any background in electoral fraud analysis. Reports say Sen. Aquilino Pimentel had recruited him as a consultant during the 2004 national canvassing. I can't help but wonder if Sen. Panfilo Lacson is behind Estrella's recent exposé, as he's known to be a Lacson man like Pedrosa.

* * *

My question, which citizens are asking too, is why Estrella came out with his exposé only now, and not during the canvassing or the failed impeachment attempt. The opposition is obviously bent on carrying out a political striptease, but two years after the presidential elections, citizens are asking when all this will end. The Senate is now the sole forum for all electoral allegations, after the marching in the streets, the impeachment and a coup attempt failed to oust GMA. As a result, this chamber, which has its own dirty election linen to hide, has sat on crucial bills passed by the House, like the Anti-Terrorism Act, the Anti-Smuggling Act, the Billion Trees Act, the Bio-Fuel Act, etc. The Senate has become a second NBI, Ombudsman or Comelec—with a whopping P2 billion annual budget.

* * *

Some pundits have asserted that the Senate's constant raking up of the electoral fraud issue is only for propaganda, since the senators know nothing would come out of it. By law, a protest can be lodged only within one month after the proclamation of the winner. Moreover, the Supreme Court has already ruled that the case of FPJ vs. GMA can no longer be revived since FPJ has already passed away. But the senators seem to seek two things: to rile up the people (though the latter remain unmoved), and to force a snap election (so that the ambitious senators can run for president and vice president). But if GMA is ousted or chooses to do a Thaksin, both of which seem far-fetched, De Castro is her constitutional successor.

* * *

Macalintal argues that the original Supreme Court decision in Santiago vs. Comelec of 1997 merely declared RA 6735, the Initiative Law, "inadequate" to amend the Constitution. But he asserts that nothing in the Charter authorizes the Court to declare a law inadequate, but only whether it is constitutional or unconstitutional. To buttress his assertion, he quotes from the 33-page separate opinion of Justice Reynato Puno: "The power of Congress to make laws includes the power how to write laws. The Court has the power to review the constitutionality of laws, but it has no authority to act as if it is the committee on style of Congress." Puno added that "the inadequacy of a statute is not a ground for invalidating it. The majority has broken all precedents when it did not find RA 6735 unconstitutional, yet refused to validate it. It relies on a reason unrecognized by existing jurisprudence."

Macalintal also corrected an error in this column when I wrote that the final decision on the Pirma advocates' motion for reconsideration got a 7-7 vote. He said the vote was 6 for granting the motion (which included today's most senior justices, Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban and Puno), 6 against, and 3 who inhibited themselves. Thus, he said, the issue of RA 6735 "has not yet been directly and definitively resolved by the Supreme Court," since the justices were "evenly divided."

* * *

Mayor Gerardo Espina Sr. of Naval, Biliran, a former member of GMA's constitutional commission, called to say that the three modes of amending the Constitution may be likened to the three doors to a house owned by Congress. Because the Senate refuses to get together with the House of Representatives to directly introduce amendments, Congress in effect closed the first door. By not passing a law to elect delegates to a constitutional convention, it also closed the second door. The third door, the people's initiative, is also being closed in effect, because those against it say Congress must first pass an enabling law. So in effect, the people's initiative is a hostage, a prisoner of Congress. "This is the true intent of the framers of the 1987 Constitution," Espina said. "*Inutil pala itong* people's initiative! *Hindi pala talagang para sa tao ito.*"

* * *

From aviation to nursing

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THE PREVIOUS COLUMN PIECE "MAYDAY! Mayday! for the aviation industry" tried to bring to the fore the brain drain in the aviation industry, which is becoming more acute because of foreign recruiters' poaching expedition in the country. It is so easy for poachers to entice our highly trained aviation experts with high pay because the foreign aviation industry did not have to invest in long and expensive training.

That is what the locals are complaining about. It takes 10 years and more than P10 million in training investment to produce an airline captain. Aviation engineers aren't simply plucked out of an aviation school, their skills are honed over the years. Now they are being snapped up faster than the local industry can produce their replacement.

I had spoken with very worried industry players who wanted to see some kind of moratorium on recruitment. But who can legislate against a person's right to seek higher pay? Doctors-turned-nurses as well as educators might soon become a vanishing breed as they leave in droves. And now aviation experts who are sorely needed locally are flying away to seek bluer skies. Some are even shifting to nursing.

Here are some letters from those who know first-hand what's ailing the aviation industry. They give us another view of what's on the ground and in the sky.

From Luchi Lopez: "PAL pilots, including cabin crew are not happy with their jobs, and that is why they are leaving. It is as simple as that. Since Lucio Tan took over, the pilots have been demoralized, degraded, most especially after losing their union, and treated like jeepney drivers. Mind you, that is exactly what Mr. Tan said some time ago, '*Bakit laki sueldo driver lang naman* (Why the big pay when they're just drivers)?'

"Domestic cabin crew are transferring not only because of the big pay difference but also because PAL now retires even the newly hired who turn 35 years old (just when you are starting your life). As of now, around 120 cabin crew in PAL's international and domestic flights are taking up nursing on their free time just so they can have a better future...

"It's getting harder to recruit cabin crew (for the country's airlines) because other airlines pay as much as $3,000 a month as compared to PAL's basic salary of P10,000 in domestic flights."

From Victor Edgar M. Carrillo III, president and CEO of Asian Aeronautics Services, an aircraft maintenance and repair facility and service provider based in Manila and Clark in Pampanga: "We are not spared from this brain drain... We spent so much time, money and effort to train our mechanics and technicians only to suffer their loss to overseas work. Should this exodus continue unabated, I can only paint a bleak picture of our aviation industry in the next few years. The industry is virtually going into a nosedive and may soon crash if not given support by our government.

"While your article focused more on our local airlines and service providers, we who compose the general aviation sector of the aviation industry share the same sentiments... General Aviation (GenAv) is largely concentrated at the Manila Domestic Airport and international airports in the country. GenAv includes corporate aircraft owners and operators, air taxi and charter companies, aircraft dealers and distributors, maintenance and repair facilities, aeronautical and flying schools, avionics shops, freight forwarding companies who own and operate cargo aircraft and small air cargo operators who daily fly farm-to-market produce.

"All of the above players in GenAv are in so many ways vital contributors to the economic growth of our country. We are a nation of 7,100 islands and our mission is to provide fast and safe transportation of people, tourists and cargo... And we who are directly involved in aircraft maintenance and repair have to ensure and keep our planes flying safely at all times.

"Just imagine the time when no more highly skilled airmen are available. The economy would further suffer and decline drastically. We were *numero uno* in Asia and the Pacific way back in the '70s and '80s... Many foreign airlines sent their pilots, mechanics and air traffic controllers to train in the Philippines..."

But the letter from Eunice Lacson paints a different picture of the "flight" of aviation personnel to distant skies: "I am a graduate of PATTS College of Aeronautics and have been working for nearly four years. My fiancé, who also graduated from PATTS, finished BS in Avionics Technology. Thank goodness, he was off recently to Singapore to work as aircraft technician/technical planner for Singapore Airlines Engineering Co. Sad to say, many from my batch have no work until this time. I can feel their frustration and agony. The airlines here won't hire them because they lack experience, they're new graduates, etc.

"Every year, hundreds—from airline mechanics, engineers to airline personnel—graduate from PATTS. They are very eager to get jobs in our domestic airlines but they are rejected again and again. I know this because my fiancé and I had once been through that. I know someone who finished an engineering course in my school and who had a hard time landing a job, so he took up another course. And you can guess it's nursing. He told me that he might get lucky this time.

(Flying nurses, anyone?)

"So airline executives here really can't blame these individuals if their talents are leaving... There's a new trend now. International airlines are very willing to train people because this is a good investment for them. I am writing so that the airline executives may know..."

Again, Mayday!Mayday!

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Overheard at Barangay Bansot

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

"HELLO? KAPITAN CALABASA PLEASE."

"Asec Apog! How are you, Sir?"

"It's nice here in the hotel, but we can't wear our uniforms anymore. Media."

"How may I be of service, Sir?"

"How are our signatures? Plenty-plenty?"

"Quota exceeded, Sir!"

"Very good! Did you send it to Chairman Ayos?"

"We sent it to Mayor Matacao who sent it to Governor Guiguisain."

"Ah. And the signatures, how did you *kwan* so they would *ano*?"

"Easy! The health workers went around and said if you don't like Ma'am, sign; if you like Governor, sign; if you like Mayor, sign; if you want to stay healthy, sign... But Sir, the *kwan* that you sent for *alam mo na*..."

"Yes?"

"It's not enough, so if you got my request..."

"What request?"

"Uh, for you know, '*yung dagdag*, '*yung dagdag*..."

"We will send extra *alam mo na* so you can *kwan* your *ano*."

"Thank you, Sir. See, I already booked our family's flight to Hong Kong Disneyland."

"Madame says it's very nice, but very small. Anyway, listen. Singaw ng Bayan ..."

"What? Bayan? Aren't they the enemy?"

"No, no, no! Not that Bayan. Our Bayan. Singaw ng Bayan. They want to schedule some spontaneous demonstrations."

"What? Demonstrations? Aren't they forbidden?"

"No, it's one of ours, so it's perfectly legal. Secretary Sipsip has okayed the spontaneous demonstrations and I'll fax you the schedule. Make sure you organize well so there's a good turnout."

"Yes, Sir! But we have some problems."

"What?"

"Well, Sir, here in Bansot, there's some confusion because we report to Mayor Matacao but Governor Guiguisain says we're not supposed to talk to Congressman Garapal."

"We will handle that. The governor's organization is on Cloud 9 and Madame will keep it that way. Just let us know if Senator Inutil makes an appearance in your area, OK?"

"Yes, Sir!"

"Good."

"Sir, can I ask a question?"

"What?"

"My fellow *kapitans* have a concern. The lifting of term limits applies only to mayors, governors, and congressmen. What about us?"

"Don't worry about that. There's a separate law covering you guys. Once we fix things, we can change all the laws we want."

"Very good, Sir! Our local Kalokohang Barangay had a good meeting with Usec Uhaw yesterday. They already know how to organize to show the spontaneous dedication of the youth."

"I'm glad. It's very important we manage this to appear like it's really the voice of the people."

"By the way, Sir, there are people dropping by the barangay hall asking questions."

"Like what?"

"Well, what are we proposing exactly?"

"Tell them we are obeying the will of the people. They want an end to politicking."

"No more politics? We will be out of a job? But you said ..."

"No! It's like this. We want an end to the bickering and the gridlock. We want genuine change. Just say that. That's all you have to say."

"So no to bickering through no elections? Change by keeping our officials where they are? No more politicking because we will control everything?

"Are you a destabilizer, Kapitan Calabasa?"

"What? No, Sir!"

"Then stop thinking. Stick to the message we're giving you. Just say we are listening to the people who want no more political noise and genuine change!"

"But there are those who disagree. They want us to organize a series of barangay debates."

"No debates! No discussions! No rallies!"

"But what about the political noise? There's a household that complained about the band and the motorcade being too noisy the last time."

"Shut up! I want you to instruct everyone to tune in to Rabies ng Bayan so they know what the message of the week is, OK?"

"But, Sir, we tried that. Some of the staff said it's like all the other political noise."

"That is not noise! That is information!"

"I understand, Sir! Information!"

"Good. But you got me thinking. Do you honestly mean to tell me there are citizens doubting our intentions?"

"Unfortunately, Sir. They ask me: How can you be against politicking? Won't there be politics in parliament? How can it be for change if no one is going to be changed? They even ask if I'm getting *kwan* for this *ano*!"

"And what do you say?"

"Sir, well, before I said we're for the good kind of politics, you know, our kind. And then I explain that the best change is not to change because we already have the best people!"

"And how do you handle those asking about your getting *kwan* to *ano*?"

"Sir, that's easy! I tell them: Where is your proof? What is your evidence? Prove it in court!"

"Good! We are always for the rule of law!"

"Yes, Sir. I cleared it with Judge Suhol first."

"He's a good man. He understands us. He is still studying the charges against that local troublemaker over there?"

"Who? Ka Inis? Yes, Sir! He's been studying the case for six months now. So Superintendent Tong has no reason to release him."

"Good. We have to show them who is the law!"

"But Sir, there are lawyers asking questions.

"What do they know about the law? Let them make noise. The voice of the people is the voice of God."

"Praise Jesus!"

"No. Praise Madame! Goodbye."

Passion

YOUNG BLOOD

Danica Salazar

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

"WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?"

When I was still young enough to be asked that question, my answer changed almost every time it was asked. I wanted to be a doctor and cure all the sick babies in the world. I wanted to be a scientist and build a rocket ship. I wanted to be an artist and paint murals large enough to merit a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records. I wanted to be a policewoman and rid the streets of crime.

But as I grew older, I became less concerned with the future and more involved with the present, so I forgot the question and my many childhood ambitions. My career plans were left to collect dust in a dark, forgotten corner of my mind, until that day early in my senior year in high school when I was faced with the daunting task of filling out an UPCAT application form. Filling in my name and other personal information was easy, but when I got to the part that said, "Write down your course choices and their corresponding course codes," I had to stop. It was the same question, only phrased differently: "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

At that moment, I realized that I did not want to be anything. So I tried a different tack and asked myself: "What do you want to do for the rest of your life?"

The first thing that popped into my head was: write. So I put "Journalism" as my first choice. I could not think of anything else, so I scanned the list of courses and picked out the first thing I saw that had nothing to do with numbers.

Days later, another answer to my question occurred to me: travel. I wanted to travel. So I covered the second box on my form with liquid eraser, and wrote: "BA European Languages." I countersigned the change, little knowing that I was sealing my future.

Months later, I was informed that I had passed the UPCAT, but I couldn't go into Journalism. I had qualified for BA European Languages.

I had the choice to go to three other schools, after also passing their entrance exams, and pursue a degree in mass communication, but I opted to send a confirmation letter to UP. Its reputation of being the premier university in the country and its socialized tuition cemented my decision, but there was also a desire to get out of my comfort zone and try something novel and challenging.

People were impressed when I told them that I would be going to UP, but this would immediately give way to bewilderment when I told them my course. Then they would proceed to the next question: "What are you going to do after you graduate?"

My problem was, I had absolutely no idea what to answer. After high school graduation, my classmates went off to various colleges and universities to become doctors, engineers, nurses, accountants,. lawyers. I went to UP to become...what? A translator? A tourist guide? A teacher? An ambassador? Or—horror of horrors—a bum?

I entered UP as a naïve, wide-eyed freshman to face the dual challenge of dealing with a completely new world as well as a completely new language. Spanish was worlds apart from the English I loved, and it might as well have been Martian for all I cared during my first few weeks in college. As I struggled day in and day out with impossible verb conjugations, I wondered if I had made a mistake. Many of my block mates planned to shift to other courses, and for the rest of the first semester and much of the second, I toyed with the idea of doing the same thing. Maybe I could never learn Spanish. Maybe I should just stick to what I was good at and stop trying to turn myself into a Kastilaloy.

Before I knew it, the second semester was over, and I had my class cards in my hands. Surprised at how good my grades were, I realized why I felt so pessimistic. I had been comparing my performance in English to my performance in Spanish, and because I had been studying English since I was a child, that was a very silly thing to do. I was putting limits to my potential by thinking that I could do only one thing well, while inside of me still lived the child who wanted a change of career every other week. As a cherished friend told me one time, there were many things I could do other than write and so much more I could offer. My course was preparing me to let Europe know it, she added.

Four years later, I look back at that moment and marvel how following that one piece of advice had changed my life. I have come a long way from being a confused UP freshman desperately trying to learn the Spanish subjunctive mood. I am now living every European Language student's dream: a scholar in one of the best universities in Spain, finding love and adventure and a much-desired master's degree in the most beautiful place one can ever hope to find these things. Sometimes as I pass by Salamanca's Plaza Mayor, I pause for a second just to drink in the indescribable beauty around me, and I wonder what life would have been if I had not decided to study Spanish.

Once again, I find myself at a crossroads. A master's degree can take me anywhere, from a teaching [illegible] back home to a research opportunity here in Europe to [illegible]torate in the United States. I feel the same uncertainty I felt four years ago, but now I look at it not with doubt or fear but with the excitement of a child about to open a wonderful present. This difference in outlook is due to a piece of advice that made me search inside my heart and find where my passion lay.

That, ultimately, is the most important thing in choosing a career: passion. My high school classmates went off to learn how to build structures, diagnose diseases, compute assets and liabilities, defend cases, because these are their passion. I went off to study languages so I could experience new cultures and new environments, and share this experience with others, because this is my passion.

This passion is something that transcends ambition. It is a consuming desire to pursue my dreams and follow a career path wherever it leads, regardless of the negative opinion of others and the challenges that lie ahead. This passion is something beyond the need for worldly gain. It is a continuous search for knowledge and success in a field that gives me an unexplainable feeling of satisfaction and achievement. And it is this passion that provided the answer to the familiar childhood question.

What I wanted to be when I grew up was a contented person with absolutely no regrets.

Danica Salazar, 22, graduated magna cum laude from the University of the Philippines in Diliman and is now taking her master's degree in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language at the University of Salamanca, as a scholar of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation.

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Our useless 'leadership caste' and paper-thin middle class

I READ ASUNCION DAVID MAramba's March 26 INQUIRER article titled "Middle-class revenge." The last time I was in the Philippines, I actually had a rather interesting conversation with a high school classmate. He's a doctor now, based in Chicago. We both thought that the middle class that's left in the Philippines is now so paper-thin since the Filipino middle class is now abroad.

I think there's something like 2 million (perhaps more) Filipinos here in the United States. I could be wrong. But there are millions of Filipinos all over the planet, part of the diaspora. I think not all of them would qualify as part of that middle class in countries where they work—the domestics, for instance. But certainly, their being abroad has lifted their conditions back in the Philippines.

I really feel sorry for the way things are going in the country. We're all waiting for Godot it seems. By the looks of it, he's not coming—perhaps, not any time soon. Though I do think that what the country needs is not a new president, or new politicians, or new government leaders.

Our "leadership caste" is for all intents and purposes like a head cut off from the body. Our leaders don't do anything anymore for ordinary Filipinos, who survive and even thrive despite—not because of—their government and their leaders. For ordinary Filipinos, their leaders could all go to hell and the country would still work. The problem is, the leaders insist on dragging everyone down.

The more I think about it, the more I am seriously convinced that what is going to change that place and what we are all really waiting for is something like a "lightning rod"—can't think of a better term, sorry. But what I mean is a focal point of inspiration, someone or something that will fire everyone up, draw the collective spirit, will and inspiration of every single man, woman and child, and channel all of that into something that will move everyone to believe in himself or herself.

I pray almost every day for that. I used to pray that God would send a leader who would help transform the place, ala Mahathir Mohamad. Now I pray that God would raise someone, anyone, who would inspire, arouse and perhaps even inflame everyone to pick himself or herself up and just do whatever needs to be done; also, someone who will be completely selfless and whose only "selfish" motive would, perhaps, be to leave a lasting legacy of good, and be remembered by grateful Filipinos for thousands of generations.

We don't need leaders. They're a dime a dozen, and the present crop we have—even the young ones, sadly—leave much to be desired. What we need over there is someone to fire everyone up, and I mean everyone, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, atheists, agnostics, the rich, the poor, the middle class, the intelligentsia, the squatters. Everyone. I'm rather hoping God will do it sooner than later. I still haven't lost my trust, thankfully.

—**FERDINAND SANTOS,**
frss1111@yahoo.com

Who could be a better president than GMA?

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE news story "GMA invocation of God angers religious leaders." (PDI, 3/9/06)

Why should religious leaders get angry at President Macapagal-Arroyo's claim that it's God's will that she is the President of the Philippines? Are they (bishops/priests) the only ones who have the right to invoke God's will? Are they the only ones who can surely know God and the truth to say they alone would know how best to address the problems of our country?

Many people cannot accept GMA as the legitimate President or cannot find her leadership credible because of the Hello Garci tapes, the corruption charges against people close to her, the calibrated preemptive response, Executive Order 464, Proclamation 1017, etc. Can we say that the Jews' exile in Egypt and their persecution by the Pharaoh, followed by their meanderings in the desert, were not the will of God?

When Christ was angered by the sight of the House of God turned into a market place, was it not the will of God that Jesus turned down the vendors' tables and drove them away? When Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver coins, was it not the will of God, was it not part of the divine plan to save mankind from eternal damnation?

Was it not the will of God that the plane carrying President Magsaysay crashed on Mt. Manunggal?

What kind of a leader do we want? A righteous, sinless and faultless president? Even the bishops and the priests commit sins; they have their own weaknesses. Why then do we blame the President and administration for every problem we have?

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita was right to say, "Everything that we are in this universe is God's will." So, instead of relentlessly arguing about GMA's continued stay in office, let's pray for our President that she may govern well.

Romans 13:1-2 says: "Everyone must obey state authorities because no authority exists without God's permission and the existing authorities have been put there by God. Whoever opposes the existing authority, opposes what God has ordered."

Sirach 10:4 says: "The government on the earth is in the hands of the Lord and over it he will raise up the right man for the time."

So who could be a better president for now?

—**ARTHUR B. CABALLERO,**
corner Moles and Santos Streets,
Tangub, Bacolod City

Marcos' 'Yes' campaign all over again in GMA's 'train'

THE PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE FOR Charter change is reminiscent of the "Yes" campaign of the Marcos regime, which gave the 1973 Constitution a semblance of having been ratified by the people. Like in the Marcos campaign, government resources and machinery have been used and are still being used for the "people's initiative."

Marcos' "Yes" campaign had participants in barangay assemblies raise their hands (in answer to some questions) purportedly to show that they approved of the Marcos Constitution. The "people's initiative," which is actually the initiative of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Jose de Venecia, also was launched in barangay assemblies (although called for other reasons) where barangay residents were asked to sign a document calling for Charter change.

The similarity between Marcos' "Yes" campaign and Ms Arroyo's people's initiative gives one a sense of déjà vu, a feeling that the country is again being railroaded into a dictatorship.

—**MARIO Y. BOCO,**
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LETTERS

Some myths about unicameral system

AS A FOREIGNER WITH A FILipino family, I have faithfully been monitoring, for the past 28 years, the political and economic developments in this country. Many of these I often found not easy to understand.

Now, there is all this hullabaloo about Charter change. It is claimed that a shift to a unicameral/federal system will solve the problems of politics, economy and especially corruption that have been hounding the nation. Isn't such a claim just a figment of the imagination, wishful thinking and, therefore, simply misleading?

If the country's problems came about because the present administration (and former administrations) is ineffective, incompetent, corrupt, etc., why would things change if the same leaders remain in power to run the new system?

Will Charter change automatically lead to character change? With Charter change, will all corrupt people apologize and return the bribes, kickbacks, as well as their "profits" from gambling and smuggling? A system cannot be corrupt, only the people.

On the other hand, if the country's problems stemmed from causes other than inefficiency and corruption, why would Charter change be needed? And why should the change lead to a unicameral system specifically? None of the old, established and real democracies is unicameral. Look at the United Kingdom, Austria, Switzerland and Germany, to name a few. All these countries have two legislative chambers—usually, with one representing the people and political parties, the other representing the federal states and the provinces.

Precisely, unicameral systems promote and make easier the commission of graft and corruption because the majority can push through with whatever they want, without a counterpart to "check-and-balance" it. And since in such a system reelection is unlimited, a corrupt government can stay in power for as long as it can until it will have been overthrown by a revolution.

—**KURT SETSCHEN,**
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NAPC head sleeping on the job?

"ERADICATING POVERTY IS A Utopian dream." Ironic that this statement should come from the person mandated to oversee the country's poverty-reduction programs (PDI, 3/29/06), a clear indication that the NAPC's (National Anti-Poverty Commission) lead convenor, Secretary Zamzamin Ampatuan, is not fit for the job.

I agree that it is not an easy task. But poverty reduction is not impossible to achieve if the government will only use its resources wisely for the right programs. Tell me how much public money lines the pockets of the corrupt, and I'll tell you why the country remains poor.

And yet, Ampatuan did not say anything about the availability of a system already being used by some local governments to locate who, where, why and how the poor are. In fact, the system has been endorsed through memoranda and circulars by the National Statistical Coordinating Board (NSCB), the Department of the Interior and Local Government and NAPC itself! As usual, though, like the so many unfunded programs and initiatives dumped on local governments, little support, if any, has been provided the LGUs to implement the system.

The Community-Based Monitoring System (1) diagnoses the poverty at the local level; (2) determines the causes of poverty; (3) identifies eligible beneficiaries; (4) provides data for the crafting of appropriate targeted policies and programs; and (5) assesses the impact of policies and programs. The NAPC was envisioned to be the national repository of these data and, therefore, can be the source of data for identifying eligible beneficiaries to targeted programs of the national and local government. I am just wondering what Ampatuan has been doing at the NAPC for him to miss this opportunity.

Ampatuan and the National Economic and Development Authority chief will have to do their homework. I say it is not impossible to know "where the poorest of the poor" are in Metro Manila. The City of Pasay has invested in CBMS, and can now track down the poor using the 13 core local poverty indicators, down to the household level. If that does not tell Neda where the poorest of the poor are, I don't know what will.

I suggest that they allot some time to visit Cabugcayan town in Biliran, San Julian in Northern Samar, Tolosa in Leyte and other municipalities in Region 8 (which, through and in partnership with the Institute for Democratic Participation in Governance, have invested on their own in the CBMS) and find out for themselves the value of the findings generated out of the system.

Then and only then, should they speak about what poverty really is in this country.

—**LIZA M. VIDA,**
advocacy officer,
Kaisampalad Inc.,
Kaisampalad@skyinet.net

GMA's military solution to tax evasion

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo doesn't have to threaten smugglers and tax cheats with court martial. (PDI, 3/19/06)

All she needs to do to stop them from cheating the government is to put her foot down on agencies like the Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue and demand their honest performance.

President Arroyo should stop thinking that the nation's problems can best be addressed by the military.

—**MANUEL P. MEJORADA,**
Pavia, Iloilo

Lawlessness in law enforcement

IF PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo and her gang are keen students of recent history, they will realize that the imposition of martial rule—that is, rule by presidential fiat under the guise of a constitutional mandate, enforced by an abusive military and police—will merely exacerbate political dissent.

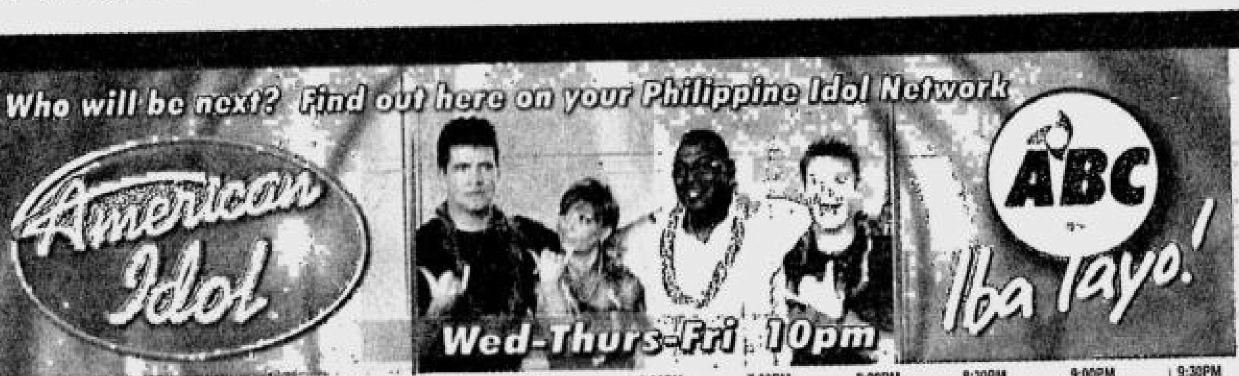
The "no rally" policy clearly violates the right of our people to peaceably assemble. The sight of policemen beating defenseless men and women to prevent them from peacefully gathering to seek redress from government inaction or abuse is, in the words of a famous jurist, "lawlessness in law enforcement." The Arroyo administration has become a lawless, coercive and oppressive threat to the civil liberties of its own citizens.

Our own history teaches us that the protection of free speech and free thought depends not merely on a statement of law but also on the actions of men and women who defend that right. We hope that our writers, lawyers, workers and students will again rise to defend our civil liberties against the unconstitutional impositions of Ms Arroyo and her gang of ruffians.

A coercive government, as Abraham Lincoln once said, does not long endure.

—**RICARDO MAGTIBAY,**
Naic, Cavite

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Thursday, April 6, 2006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2:30PM: Kapamilya Cinema; Police Academy; Mr. Bean, The Animated Series; The Catholic Faith & Vatican II; Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako; Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters; The Daily Show With Jon Stewart; Secret Gardens; Africa From The Ground Up

3:00PM: CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6); Richie Rich; I Can't Stop Loving You; Father's Day (3:10PM); Crossing Jordan; Stormproof; Totally Spies; Pro Billiards '05 World Trick Shot Magic; Veronica Mars 2; Angelus (3:15PM); Hannity & Colmes; Now and Forever; Mcleod's Daughters IV; Yakitate! Japan; EZ Shop; The Late Show David Letterman; The Fix; Punk'D; Rock MYX; Megastructures

3:30PM: WNCAA (Rerun); Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi; [illegible] Black/Untalkative Bunny; Virtue Storybook; First Love Of A Royal Prince; Mr. Ajikko; Mission Organization; My MYX

4:00PM: Pasion de Amor; CSI: Miami (Season II); Tom & Jerry Show; Business International; Law & Order: Special Victims Unit; The Greatest Ever; Mickey Mouse and Friends; Pro Billiards '03 Trick Shot Magic Baltimore, MD USA; Change of Heart; Image Of God; On The Record With Greta Van Susteren; The Prince And The Pauper; D.I.C.E.; Smackdown; Carol Duvall; Sessions Sandwich; Mellow MYX; Storm Stories

4:30PM: Barclay's EPL; Little Amy; Baby Looney Tunes; The Bellboy (4:45PM); Lilo & Stitch; Elimidate; Your Vocation: God's Call In Your Life; Dragonball Z; Landslide; Samurai Deeper Kyo; Moto Mario; Pop Inc; Urban MYX

5:00PM: Mr. Bean; 30 Seconds To Fame; Camp Lazlo; Sana Bukas Pa Ang Kahapon; World News; Profiler; Animal Face-Off; Martin Mystery; Asian X Games '05 Presented by Kia; Blind Date; Rosary With Mother Angelica; The O'Reilly Factor; Great Teacher Onizuka; Shadow Of The Elves; Home Shopping Network; Hot Off The Grill; Take 5; Frontlines of Construction

5:30PM: FA Cup; Naruto; Samsung Sports World; Coconut Fred's Fruit Salad Island; World Sport; Totally Spies; Fifth Wheel; Good Or Evil, Who Decides?; La Robe de Mariage; Mission Odyssey; IBC Express Balita; Good Eats; 2006 MAA Nominee Specials; MYX News

6:00PM: Outstanding Twins; Cold Squad; The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy; The Blues Brothers; Larry King Live; Forensic Files; Failure Analysis; Kim Possible; In The Driver's Seat; Seinfeld; EWTN Gallery; Your World With Neil Cavuto; 24 Oras; Bewitched; Chasing Liberty (6:10 PM); Rune Soldier; Pangarap Kong Jackpot; JLU; Extreme Cuisine; MTV Hits; Top 5

6:30PM: Sentro; TV Patrol World; Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles; North Mission Road; Mr. Bean, The Animated Series; Table Tennis '04 Sensational C'ships; Ambush Makeover; Where God Weeps; The Nanny; Beyblade G-Revolution; Just For Laughs (Gags); Unwrapped; Star MYX

7:00PM: Mumbai Thrillers; Amazon; Power Rangers Wild Force; Trip; Business International; Law & Order; Extreme Engineering; That's So Raven That's So Trendy Week; Pro Billiards '05 BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships Finals; The Tyra Banks Show; EWTN Live Encore With Fr. Mitch Pacwa; Fox & Friends; Extra Challenge; Family Law III; Yu-Gi-Oh GX; Home Shopping Network; Mad TV; Tyler's Ultimate; Get Spotted; OPM MYX; Wow!

7:30PM: S.O.S; Gulong Ng Palad; The Gransazers; Wonderful World Of Disney; Majika; Naruto; Whose Wedding Is It Anyway?; Fax in the City; Pop MYX

8:00PM: Sa Piling Mo; Fear Factor (Season V); Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel; Paris Trout; World News Asia; Law & Order: Special Victims Unit; IBM Innovation Hour; Pro Billiards '05 Women's Trick Shot Magic Boards; Will & Grace 4; Catechisms And Controversies; Encantadia; Missing II; Rome Ep 01: The Stolen Eagle; Mirmo de Pon; ME TV; MTV Hits; MYX Daily Top Ten; About Asia

8:30PM: Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko; Panday; Friends 10; The Word Was Made Flesh; My Name Is Kim Sam Soon; Inuyasha; Everybody Hate Chris; It's Good To Be; Handpicked: Sandwich

9:00PM: Princess Lulu; Ripley's Believe It or Not; Powerpuff Girls; Dahas; World News; What Should You Do?; Mythbusters; Lizzie Mcguire; Sportscenter Asia; Queer Eye For The Straight Guy; Daily Mass (SAP) Live; Jewel In The Palace; Spooks I; Rome Ep 02: How Titus Pullo Brought Down The Republic; Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters; PTA Best Of The Philippines; The Late Show David Letterman; Martha; TRL; MYX Presents; Terrorism Week

9:30PM: Big News; Money Talks (9:40 PM); World Sport; Major League Baseball [illegible] Cubs @ Yankees; Rome Ep 03: An Owl In A Thornbush (9:45 PM); Yakitate! Japan

10:00PM: All Results Show; Maalaala Mo Kaya; Sports Disaster VI; Mucha Lucha!; World News Asia; The Closer; The Greatest Ever; Mickey Mouse and Friends; Entertainment Tonight; Angelus (10:15PM); Fox News Live; Magpakailanman; The Event; Mr. Ajikko; Global Family Series; The Daily Show With Jon Stewart; Your Private Island; Punk'D; MYX Bandarito; Megastructures: [illegible]

10:30PM: Dokyu; Duck Dodgers; Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers; The Insider; St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman; Uncle Buck; D.I.C.E.; IBC News Tonite; Comedy Central Presents; Genuine Article; My MYX

11:00PM: Guinness World Records: 50 Years, 50 Records; Justice League; Sa Ngalan Ng Pag-ibig; Dangerous Victims (11:15PM); World News; Prison Break; Power Zone; Wonderful World Of Disney; The Tonight Show With Jay Leno; The Journey Home Encore; Samurai Deeper Kyo; Home Shopping Network; South Park; E! True Hollywood Story; Sessions Sandwich; MYX Backtrax; Storm Stories: [illegible]

11:30PM: Billboard On-Air; Insider; Samurai Jack; World Sport; Saksi; Spooks I (11:45PM); Mission Odyssey; The Man Show; Rockola; MYXILOG

Channel: NBN; Nickelodeon; PBO; Qtv; RPN 9; SBN 21; Solar Sports; Sports Plus; Star Movies; Star World; Studio 23

2:30PM: Chalkzone; [illegible]; TV Shopping; NBA Game Pacers @ Bulls

3:00PM: Teledyaryo Alas-Tres; Hey Arnold!; WTA Indian [illegible]; The Bold & The Beautiful

3:30PM: SpongeBob SquarePants; Tapika Life & Live; Zenkix; All Dogs Go To Heaven 2

4:00PM: Teledyaryo Sports [illegible]; My Life As A Teenage Robot; The Prince Of Tennis; New Life TV Shopping; General Hospital; PBL Game 2

4:30PM: [illegible]; All Grown Up; MMS (My Music Station)

5:00PM: Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo; The Adventures Jimmy Neutron; Global Window; World Poker Tour 2; Harley Davidson & Marlboro Man; American Idol

5:30PM: The Fairly Odd Parents; Sino Ang May Sala?; Moms; NBA Game Spurs @ Jazz; The Simple Life

6:00PM: Tinig ng Bayan (Live); Drake & Josh; Entertainment Tonight; Winner TV Shopping; The Simpsons; Spirits

6:30PM: Naturally Sadie; Love At Aegean Sea; The Insider; Malcolm In The Middle; Pinoy Big Brother

7:00PM: Romeo; Irene; The 4400; Quantum Global; Gillette World Cup Preview 6; Tomorrow Never Dies; Star News Asia; Wazzup Wazzup

7:30PM: All That; Magic Kingdom; Mars; Slipstream; Seinfeld; The Contender

8:00PM: Teledyaryo Final Edition; All Grown Up; Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit; Medium; Oras Ng Himala; NBA Game [illegible]; World's Greatest Auto Shows; American Idol

8:30PM: As Told By Ginger; O, Mare Ko; The Simple Life; Alias (8:20 PM)

9:00PM: Four Eyes; Invasion; [illegible]; World Game; Runaway Jury; Scrubs; Desperate Housewives

9:30PM: SpongeBob SquarePants; [illegible]; News On Q; 8 Simple Rules/ Arrested Development

10:00PM: Bantay OCW With Susan K; The Adventures Jimmy Neutron; Women's Desk; Newswatch Now; Friends Again; Ray Ban [illegible] Poker Challenge; The Drew Carey Show; News Central

10:30PM: The Fairly Odd Parents; Global Window; Solar Sports Desk; Less Than Perfect; Oprah

11:00PM: My Dad The Rock Star; Irene; Kasangga Mo Ang Langit; SBN Music Video; Switch FIVB [illegible] Klagenfurt; Tango Of Opportunity; Seinfeld

11:30PM: [illegible]; Over The Green Fields; Poker Hour; American Idol; Just Shoot Me

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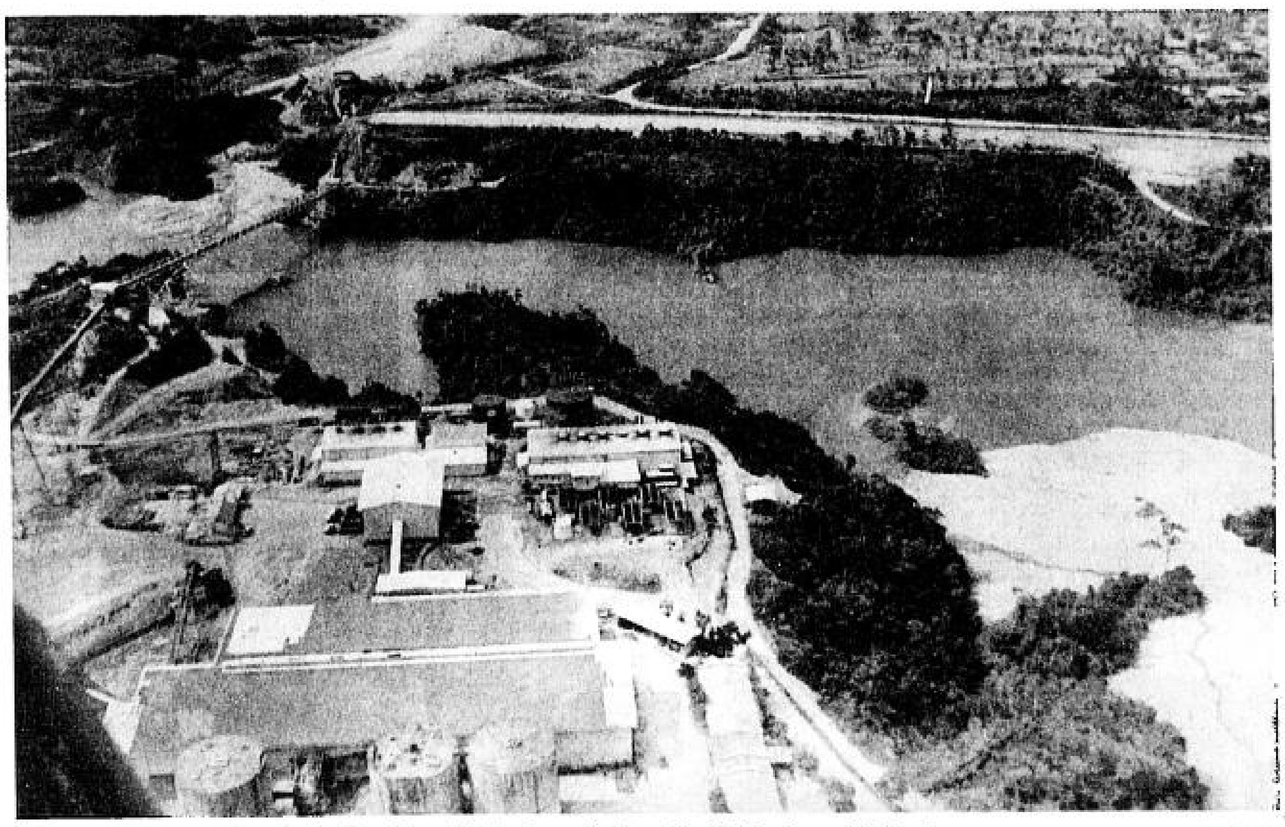
INQUIRER *Southern Luzon*

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Floreño G. Solmirano**

Missing, despising Marcopper

By Gerald Gene R. Querubin
Sta. Cruz, Marinduque



MARCOPPER'S mining site in Sta. Cruz, Marinduque before the 1997 mine spill disaster.

PDI PHOTO

WHEN MARINduque Copper Mining Corp. (Marcopper) stopped its operation in 1997, the municipality of Santa Cruz in Marinduque came to a standstill.

Almost 2,500 employees were left jobless, businesses suffered from low sales, while some had to close shop.

The Marcopper mine site is situated at Mt. Tapian in Barangay Kilo-kilo, 12 km away from the town proper.

Municipal administrator Ruby Manay, who also worked as a civil engineer for the mining company from 1994 to 1998, said Santa Cruz dropped from being a first-class municipality (average annual income: at least P35 million) to third-class (average annual income: P21 million-P27 million).

"Records showed that the municipal government almost reached bankruptcy as income plunged downward instantly. When Marcopper was still operating, Santa Cruz used to earn from the income taxes of its employees," Manay said.

"Income from business establishments fell as customers suddenly became scarce and spending became less," she added.

Businesses thrived

Venancio Yu, former president of the Santa Cruz Chinese Chamber of Commerce and owner of one of the oldest grocery stores in town, agreed.

"Since we started our grocery store in 1970, our sales peaked during the 1980s up to the early 1990s. When Marcopper closed in 1997, sales were never the same," he said.

"People spent less and seldom made purchases. Businesses, most especially in the Santa Cruz public market, became slack."

Yu, who is also a former chapter president of the Marinduque Morion chapter of the Philippine Jaycees, even said membership in the civic group was high. Many Marcopper employees joined since they could afford the expenses that went with being a member, he said.

In fact, the all-women chapter of the Jaycees of Marinduque, the Copper Queen Jaycees, was named after Marcopper.

But when the mining site closed, the organization's recruitment efforts took a dive.

Social costs

Employees used to earn the highest income rate in the province, Manay said.

They and other Marinduqueños enjoyed the use of a hospital with first-class rooms, amenities and medical equipment, and provided with the best doctors in the province.

Their medical expenses were also subsidized by Marcopper.

The employees were provided free housing, water and electricity. Those who wanted to stay in their homes outside the mining community received housing allowance.

Marcopper had its own preschool, elementary school and high school, whose educational standards were patterned after De La Salle University. The schools were among the best in the province.

Tuition of some 1,200 students whose parents were working at Marcopper were subsidized by the company.

The elementary and high schools are still open, but present enrollment is only 250 students who do not enjoy any subsidy. School administrators and faculty members depend solely on tuition for salaries and school maintenance.

Marcopper used to have a recreation hall, two swimming pools, a clubhouse, a community library, tennis courts, squash courts, a basketball court, and a golf course that could be used by employees and visitors.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. had its own branch within the vicinity of Marcopper, but this has since been transferred to the town proper after the mining company closed.

Marcopper's facilities have deteriorated and are now unusable. Some have been ransacked, while others were left without anyone to maintain or manage them.

"The good life that the people of Santa Cruz used to enjoy before is nowhere to be found now," said Manay.

What went wrong?

On March 24, 1996, the rock around the plug in the Tapian Pit drainage tunnel was fractured. The plug consequently failed.

Some 1.6 million cubic meters of tailings were released to the 26-km Makulapnit and Boac rivers in Tapian.

Considered the country's worst industrial pollution disaster, the mine tailings further polluted the Calancan Bay and affected the Boac, Makulapnit and Mogpog rivers and their surrounding communities.

The government closed the mining site following the accident.

Placer Dome Inc., which manages Marcopper, left the country without compensating the people.

According to the Marinduque Council for Environment Concerns (Macec), at least 36 women, children and men had died in the Calancan Bay area from "mysterious" diseases.

The deaths were caused by heavy metal contamination from the mine wastes scattered in the area, said Myke Magalang, Macec executive secretary.

"We have to run after Placer Dome Inc., and when we found them in Nevada, USA, a civil case was lodged in that foreign country, a very expensive quest for justice," he said.

Black Friday

Commemorating the incident, thousands of Marinduqueños sporting black shirts and black armbands converged in Boac on March 24 to mark the 10th anniversary of the infamous Boac River Mining Disaster of 1996.

March 24 had been dubbed "Black Friday" in the province after a pastoral letter issued on March 16 by Bishop Reynaldo Evangelista of the Diocese of Boac declared a "Day of Mourning, Unity and Prayer."

As early as 5 a.m., bells tolled in all churches, followed by Masses that recalled the huge losses suffered by the entire province.

In a statement, Macec said that in the 30 years that it hosted large-scale mining projects, Marinduque had remained one of the only seven fourth-class provinces in the country, ranking 14th among the poorest provinces in the Philippines.

Magalang said that with a high poverty incidence of 71.9 percent, the plight of Marinduqueños should serve as a wake-up call to other provinces, lest they fall into the trap of "economic miracles" promised by mining projects.

Show of unity

Provincial officials led by Rep. Edmund Reyes Jr., Gov. Carmencita Reyes and five mayors of the six municipalities of the province showed unity in keeping Marinduque mine-free and in opposing the inclusion of the San Antonio Copper Project in Sta. Cruz in the list of mining priority areas of the national government.

Lawyers Walter "Skip" Scott, David Ammons and Reda Dennis, three members of a team of American lawyers representing the province in a case filed against Placer Dome at the US Federal Court in Nevada, joined the commemmoration.

The suit seeks damages and just compensation for the province and its people.

The March 24 activity also marked the 30th anniversary of the start of dumping of mine wastes in the Calancan Bay in Sta. Cruz and the 13th year of the collapse of the Maguilaguila Siltation Dam in Mogpog, which resulted in a big flood that inundated the town and left behind two children dead by drowning.

IN THE KNOW

MARCOPPER operated an open-pit mine in Sta. Cruz, Marinduque that produced 30,000 tons of copper a day.

From 1964 to 1997, Placer Holdings Inc. owned 39.9 percent of the company. It is a subsidiary of Placer Dome, the world's largest gold mining company that also produces copper and silver.

During its more than 30 years of operations, Marcopper reportedly earned the equivalent of more than P40 billion in foreign exchange.

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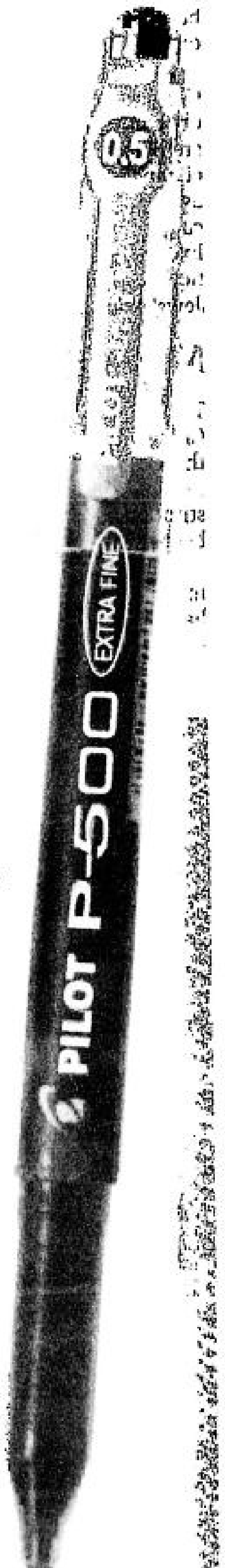

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Maliksi defiant, says he's governor

TRECE MARTIRES CITY—"I AM STILL THE GOVernor of Cavite."

Embattled Cavite Gov. Erineo "Ayong" Maliksi declared this yesterday as he spurned calls that he step down a day after the Court of Appeals ended the effectivity of an order that prevented his suspension from office.

Amid mounting tension after the CA ruling, security has tightened at the capitol with two main entrance doors locked and only one door kept open.

"I am the governor of Cavite. I was the one elected as governor. The decision of the CA is just temporary," a defiant Maliksi told reporters at his office.

The ruling, released Monday and signed by Presiding Judge Ruben Reyes of the appellate court's First Division, allowed the enforcement of the Ombudsman's six-month suspension of Maliksi.

The order stemmed from graft charges filed by Maliksi's rival, Vice Gov. Johnvic Remulla, for alleged irregularities in the purchase of rice worth P7.5 million in October 2004.

Maliksi reiterated that he was innocent.

He said he was not keen on leaving the capitol building. Neither would he allow a smooth transition to Remulla as acting governor.

He said he was ready to stay in his office until the courts resolve his case.

"If I have to stay put here, I will do it to fight for my rights. I will do everything to defend what is good for me and all my constituents," the governor said.

Maliksi had holed himself up inside his office for nine days after the Department of the Interior and Local Government served his suspension order upon the request of Victor Fernandez, the deputy Ombudsman for Luzon, in August last year.

Maliksi said his lawyers had already filed a motion for reconsideration. Should the CA dump his petition, he said he would file a motion for certiorari at the Supreme Court.

Remulla offered reconciliation and said he was willing to meet with the governor.

"What I want is normalcy at the capitol. I want to walk around and assure the employees that (they will not be removed from their work)," he said.

Maliksi earlier accused the vice governor and Malacañang of conniving to influence the Ombudsman decision in exchange for favorable votes from Remulla's brothers—Cavite Representatives Gilbert Remulla (second district) and Jesus Crispin Remulla (third district)—on the impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo last year.

Gilbert signed the complaint, but Crispin did not.

Maliksi rejected talks with Remulla. "What he says is different from what he does. Just like before, his (reconciliation offer) is just for media play," the governor said.

At least 500 supporters of Maliksi trooped to the capitol grounds Monday.

"We call on the governor's political opponents to end this very divisive and self-serving kind of politics. Poor Caviteños like us are adversely affected by these kinds of events," said Renato Romero, a Maliksi follower.

The scene at the capitol was reminiscent of last year's when several pro-Maliksi groups put up a barricade as their leader locked himself up in his office for nine days.

Remulla said he had no plans of ordering the dispersal of Maliksi's supporters. But he said he would not allow them to disrupt operations at the capitol.

"While they have the right to express themselves, they have no right to prevent the people from coming into the capitol and transact business," he said. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Mayors study plan to build new terraces in Ifugao

BAGUIO CITY—MAYORS OF towns that host some of the world's centuries-old rice terraces are exploring the possibility of developing new terraces using the ancient mountain irrigation technology of Ifugao.

Kiangan Mayor Albert Indunan said he proposed expanding the terraces because of a demand for bigger farm areas and to produce more *tinawon*, the indigenous rice variety that grows only on these terraces.

Indunan, in a press conference here on Wednesday, said he wanted mayors to consider the profitability of the ancient terraces now that the Ifugao provincial government has undertaken the task of restoring them.

President Macapagal-Arroyo relinquished the function of saving the terraces to Ifugao five years ago, to comply with demands of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

Unesco lists the Ifugao rice terraces among the world's heritage sites.

Caretaker agency

One of the world body's prescribed conditions is for the Philippine government to create a caretaker agency that would oversee the rehabilitation of the terraces.

But Ms Arroyo abolished the Banaue Rice Terraces Task Force due to a government streamlining policy, and devolved the task to the provincial government.

Ifugao is no longer following a strict timeline imposed by Unesco and two defunct agencies that drew up the master plan for the terraces' revival, Indunan said.

"We do not buckle down to pressure. What concerns us is that we can feed our people without [the government expecting us] to toil on the terraces forever," he said.

Indunan said the municipalities of Ifugao were more inclined to provide employment and livelihood opportunities to their population.

Despite their tourist drawing power, the Ifugao terraces have not boosted the local economy, due in part to the absence of investments and infrastructure, according to the Cordillera Regional Development Council.

Tourism

Banaue, for example, relies on tourism but it can only offer hostels to most foreign tourists, apart from the Philippine Tourism Authority's Banaue Hotel.

Indunan said he was still frustrated by the slow pace of promoting the terraces' restoration among the young Ifugao.

However, the mayor said local government units had already drawn up ordinances or land use policies designed to protect the terraces.

In his town, Indunan said barangay councils had already passed resolutions prohibiting residents from building cemeteries on terrace slopes.

The resolutions also reduce the number of houses that can be built on top of the terraces.

The rice terraces are clan-owned and have been indigenous family resources for centuries despite the absence of modern land titles. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

HOT SPOT

ARNOLD ALMACEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

A foreign female tourist basks in the sun on world-renowned Boracay Island. Security was brought to a higher level on the island in anticipation of the arrival of hundreds of tourists for the vacation months.

RP expects arrival of 3M tourists

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—THE COUNTRY EXpects at least 3 million foreign tourists arriving this year, with Russia, India and other "new markets" as potential points of origin.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano based the bullish projection on first quarter figures of his department.

"This is the first time in the Philippine tourism history that before the end of the first quarter, we exceeded 500,000 foreign tourists," Durano told reporters here yesterday.

Last year, the Philippines attracted over 2.6 million foreign tourists, resulting in the direct employment of more than 800,000 individuals and a P150-billion infusion into the economy, he said.

With the expected increase in arrivals of foreign tourists this year, Durano said the tourism industry could bring over P250 billion to the cash-strapped government.

"And we also expect to generate direct employment that is almost the same as that of last year's," said Durano, who attended the closing of the first tourism job fair held at Waterfront Hotel.

The two-day event drew 107 agencies from the private sector and seven government offices, and over 3,000 jobseekers.

Quoting a report of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, Durano said the tourism industry was last year's biggest employment generator.

ROUNDUP

Another militant slain

BUTUAN CITY—Another member of the party-list group Bayan Muna was shot dead by unidentified men inside his house in Rosario, Agusan del Sur early yesterday. The victim, Lorenzo Cervantes, was sleeping when armed men fired at his house in Barangay Anoling at about 2 a.m., according to Analyn Lumawag, spokesperson of the militant human rights group Karapatan-Caraga. Cervantes' wife and children were unhurt. Lumawag said Cervantes led the campaign against the entry of a Singaporean palm oil firm in Rosario town. *Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Higher fees for foreigners

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) of Lake Balinsasayao in Sibulan town in Negros Oriental is standing pat on its decision to collect higher entrance fees from foreign tourists. It reaffirmed a decision to collect the new rates in the wake of complaints received by the Provincial Tourism Office from foreigners on the disparity of fees imposed on local and foreign visitors. Myla Abellana, provincial tourism officer, said she received at least two complaints from foreigners who wanted to know why they were being charged P100 in entrance fees at Lake Balinsasayao and Filipinos only P20. Lake Balinsasayao is one of the major tourist attractions in the province. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Revenue collection up

BATANGAS CITY—Local revenue collections increased to P136 million in February, compared to the P49 million recorded for the same period last year. The latest figure was also 31 percent higher than the district's collection goal of P104 million for the month. Arthur Castro, assistant revenue district officer, attributed the increase to the people's willingness to pay taxes alongside with the sugar industry's continuous growth. The reformed value-added tax (VAT) did not contribute much to the take, Castro said. *Marlon Alexander Luistro, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Kanlaon open to hikers

BACOLOD CITY—The Mt. Kanlaon Natural Park will be open to climbers this Holy Week and throughout the year, unless the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology advises otherwise. Park superintendent Julie Rex Molavin said authorities decided to open Kanlaon to trekkers after the volcano had not shown signs of restiveness since last year. Kanlaon has erupted at least 14 times since 1866. A permanent danger zone has been designated within a 4-km radius from the volcano. On Aug. 10, 1996, three hikers died when the volcano spewed steam and ash. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

SC rules strike illegal

ILOILO CITY—The Supreme Court has upheld an appellate court's ruling that declared illegal a strike mounted by employees of the University of San Agustin here last year. Fifteen union officers were dismissed as a result of the work stoppage to demand pay increases. In the last two years, Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, Mayor Jerry Treñas and Gov. Niel Tupas tried but failed to convince university officials to reconsider their decision to terminate the union officers. *Hazel Villa, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Mayor wants Senate gone

ALIS DYAN! NOW NA!

LUCENA CITY—Mayor Ramon Talaga Jr. expressed support to planned Charter changes to abolish the Senate. "Let us just have a unicameral legislative body … Anyway, most of the senators only make their presence felt in different parts of the country only during elections and after that no more," Talaga said. He said the signatures that were gathered during the barangay constituent assemblies fell short of the required number to support the Charter change campaign. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Police nab kidnap suspect in hiding for 5 yrs

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Police yesterday arrested the alleged leader of a kidnap gang operating in Mindoro five years after he eluded authorities.

Members of the Mimaropa and Calabarzon police announced the arrest of Marlon Cortez, 32, alias Brandon Punzalan, a native of Baco, Oriental Mindoro.

Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, Calabarzon police chief, said Cortez led a kidnapping gang that operated in the two Mindoro provinces.

Cortez carried a reward of P300,000.

Noble, in a press conference, said police caught up with Cortez in a house in Barangay Nueva in San Pedro, Laguna on Thursday.

It had taken police two months to track down Cortez before his arrest, according to Noble.

He said although the police already had custody of Noble, they did not announce his arrest as operations were still under way to bag two other members of his group.

Cortez did not resist arrest, said Noble. "It's time for him to face the cases filed against him," said the police chief.

While in hiding, police said Cortez was able to find work as a caretaker at a fighting cock farm in nearby Muntinlupa City.

Wanted man

Police said Cortez's employer had no idea that Cortez was a wanted man.

Police said the suspect and his group kidnapped 5-year-old Remar Medina and his nanny in Calapan City on March 20, 2001 while they were on their way to school.

Cortez and his gang mates, including two of his cousins, brought the victims to Baco town.

The group demanded a P5-million ransom from the boy's parents who ran a small business in the city.

But just a day after they seized the victims, Cortez's parents learned about the kidnapping and went to see their son in Cortez's hideout.

After they failed to find their son, the couple untied and rescued Medina and his nanny from a hut at the group's lair.

The parents of Cortez brought the two kidnap victims to a nearby police station.

A pursuit operation in Baco led to the arrest of one of Cortez's cousins, who allegedly served as a lookout of the group. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Thaksin names longtime friend acting PM

BANGKOK—PRIME MINISTER Thaksin Shinawatra yesterday handed over his responsibilities to a longtime friend and fellow ex-police officer less than 24 hours after saying he would step down. *(See related story in The World, Page A21.)*

Thaksin told crowds of supporters outside his Thai Rak Thai (Thais Love Thais) party headquarters that he would not stay on in a caretaker role but let Deputy Prime Minister Chitchai Wannasathit become acting prime minister.

"I have decided that if I have to rest to let the country move forward, I want to rest now. I have appointed Chitchai to do my work from now on. I need to rest," Thaksin said.

Chitchai, 59, who was recently appointed to oversee security affairs, is a close associate of the prime minister. The two studied together in the United States and both joined the Royal Thai Police department where Chitchai rose to senior positions.

Since he is not a member of parliament, he is unlikely to remain in the job after the body meets to name Thaksin's successor.

Thaksin was the second Thai leader to step down under pressure in the past decade and a half, but this time without bloodshed.

In 1992, demonstrators against a military strongman were gunned down before the king stepped in to end the fighting and usher in a period of stable democracy.

Opponents of Thaksin welcomed his sudden announcement that he would step down in an effort to reunite a nation divided by weeks of protests.

Diehard supporters

But supporters of Thaksin, who enjoys strong support in rural areas in part because of his generous social welfare and economic assistance programs, were visibly upset.

"We love Thaksin!" shouted thousands of supporters, many tossing red roses and weeping as he arrived at his party headquarters, a day after announcing that he would step down.

Apart from his diehard supporters, many in Bangkok were sorry to see him depart.

"I'm sorry about him," said Jarouyporn Jitreeyat, 48, a purse boutique owner who was shopping at a downtown department store. "He gave many things to the Thai people, like technology and new projects, and he also helped the poor."

With Thaksin's resignation, however, Jarouyporn was optimistic that the political turmoil will subside.

Others like Ruja Thepnarumit was happy to see Thaksin go. "I don't like him," said the 35-year-old office worker. "He exploited his power for his own benefit."

The surprise resignation on late Tuesday followed weekend polls that would have likely seen Thaksin returned to office, but with significantly less support than he had when voters handed him a landslide election victory a year ago.

Insider trading

The premier had come under increasing pressure to quit since January, when public anger erupted over his family's $1.9-billion tax-free sale of its 49.6-percent stake in Shin Corp., the telecom giant Thaksin founded before entering office, to a Singapore state firm.

Critics allege the sale involved insider trading and complain a key national asset is now in a foreign government's hands. Thaksin also has been accused of stifling the media and mishandling a Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand that flared under his rule.

Thaksin's critics hailed his imminent departure, saying it was a victory for their cause, while local media called his resignation plans a relief, with some newspapers urging protesters to now abandon their campaign against the premier.

But one protest leader, media tycoon Sondhi Limthongkul, said anti-Thaksin demonstrators would again rally on Friday, this time to put pressure on the premier to withdraw from political life entirely.

"Thaksin's announcement is a good start, but he only gave 25 percent. Can he give more?" Sondhi told reporters. "We will give Thaksin another 30 days to make sure he does what he promised to do," he added.

King's involvement

Thaksin's critics staged weeks of street protests demanding he resign for abusing his power, while his political rivals boycotted early elections held on Sunday that were seen as a referendum on the premier's leadership.

The opposition's rejection of compromise and a strong protest vote in the polls, mainly in Bangkok and the south of the country, further undermined Thaksin.

But it was only after a meeting with King Bhumibol Adulyadej that Thaksin finally announced he intended to quit. *(See story on Page A17.)*

Thaksin mentioned the king several times in his remarks late Tuesday, suggesting a possible royal intervention to halt the spiraling political crisis as the monarch prepares to celebrate his 60th year on the throne.

"As the celebration for the king is approaching, he has no choice but to step aside to allow the reconciliation process to begin now," said Panitan Wattanayagorn, a visiting professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins University.

The former telecoms tycoon said in a 10-minute televised live statement that he would not seek the premiership after a new parliament convenes out of respect for the king.

"My reason for not accepting the post of prime minister is because this year is an auspicious year for the king," a somber looking Thaksin told stunned party officials and supporters, including his family.

"I beg all Thais to sacrifice for the king." Thaksin said he would remain a member of parliament and leader of the Thai Rak Thai.

Thaksin said that scores of world leaders would be coming to Thailand in two months for the anniversary of the king's accession to the throne, and that the country should "clean up our house" before then.

Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a Chulalongkorn University political scientist, called Thaksin's decision a result of "royal involvement without intervention."

New parliament

"Everyone wants to come to the June celebration with grace and dignity. We don't want to have protests in the streets," he said.

Despite Thaksin's announcement, it is unclear when he would actually leave the post he has held since 2001.

John Brandon, director of international relations at the Asia Foundation, said the prime minister's decision did little to resolve the immediate hurdles to forming a new parliament, after the election boycott and a strong protest vote left 39 districts with no elected representative.

"I think it's an important step to help resolve the crisis," he said of Thaksin's resignation. "The next big step is how (to resolve) what happened with the results of the current election."

All 500 seats must be filled for parliament to convene. The Election Commission plans by-elections on April 23, and will reopen the nomination process for those seats in hopes of attracting new candidates.

In most of Bangkok, where protest ballots outnumbered votes for Thaksin's party, residents found themselves stuck with representatives that a majority of them opposed.

The Election Commission has said it may not release final results until the end of the week, but a partial count gave Thaksin 54 percent, with more than two-thirds of constituencies reporting.

Constitutional reform

Thaksin's decision to step down despite his apparent win set the stage for a months-long process of constitutional reform, with an interim government running the country until new elections can be organized.

Although he did not mention any plans in his address Tuesday night, both Thaksin and the political opposition have spoken of creating a special assembly that would amend the constitution—essentially to weaken the powers of the prime minister.

Once the new parliament convenes, Thaksin has said that process could take up to 15 months before new elections, which the opposition says it is ready to join.

Even a lengthy period of political reforms under a caretaker government was preferable to the unpredictable standoff that had gripped Thailand for two months, said Kiatphong Noijaiboon, a vice chair of the Federation of Thai Industries.

"After the parliament convenes, political reforms can move forward," Kiatphong said. "It will be much easier for the opposition parties to run in the new election to make sure Thai democracy works properly."

Still popular

When new elections are held, nothing stops Thaksin from staging a new bid to lead Thailand, noted Panitan Wattanayagorn, visiting professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins University.

"That remains to be seen because he is still very much popular. But he has to find ways to increase his legitimacy" after the strong protest vote in Bangkok and southern Thailand, Panitan said.

Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party is still the most powerful and best-financed political party in Thailand, and is likely to remain so as long at the billionaire former telecoms tycoon remains at the helm. *Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters*

Militants admit GMA no Thaksin

ACTIVIST LEADERS YESTERday said President Macapagal-Arroyo would never do a Thaksin.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said the two leaders were very different because the Thai premier had "a sense of self-sacrifice for the greater good."

"*May kahihiyan* (He has a sense of shame)," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said of Thaksin in a statement.

"[But] to everyone who thinks Gloria would do a Thaksin soon, they might end up disappointed. Self-sacrifice doesn't rank very high among the values of this President," Reyes said.

Bayan chair Carol Araullo said Ms Arroyo's refusal to step down had left the opposition and militant groups with only extra-constitutional means to push for her removal from office.

"Survey results show that people are becoming more open toward extra-constitutional means. This is not the fault of the people or the anti-Arroyo movement. This is the result of the President shutting down all constitutional avenues for her removal," Araullo said in a statement.

She added: "If people resort to extra-constitutional means, we have only Ms Arroyo to blame. The people will exercise all available legal and peaceful means to see her removal from power."

She cited the quashing of the impeachment complaint by the President's allies in the House, along with the controversial issuances such as EO 464, PP 1017 and the calibrated preemptive response policy—all aimed, she said, at taking away the constitutional means to remove Ms Arroyo from Malacañang.

"She (Ms Arroyo) is addicted to power. Her lust and thirst for power is eternal," the militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya said in its own statement.

Pamalakaya said a popular revolt was the only option left to those who want Ms Arroyo out of Malacañang. *Blanche S. Rivera*

Thai king is 'Strength of the Land,' 'Incomparable Power'

LONGEST-REIGNING monarch, Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej, is on his 60th year. AP

From page A1

er, photographer and yachtsman—is regarded.

His picture hangs in every taxi, office and shop. Before every film, audiences stand in cinemas to pay him homage while pictures of the king flash across the screen.

People stop and stand to pay respect to the king, even on subway platforms during rush hour, when the national anthem is played twice a day on radio and television.

When the mass transit system opened, it had to receive a special order that allowed the trains to keep moving while the anthem plays.

His steady hand has seen him outlast 20 prime ministers, 15 constitutions and at least as many coups, and despite carving out a position of strict neutrality in politics he has occasionally intervened to spectacular effect.

Royal intervention

Rivals to Thaksin had hoped for similar royal intervention to end the latest political standoff, but it was unclear exactly what role the monarch played in influencing the premier's decision.

In 1973, after riots broke out at a Bangkok University, he asked a prime minister and his henchman to leave the country in a bid to halt a rising tide of social disorder. They obeyed.

Military crackdown

In 1992, he called the then prime minister, General Suchinda Kraprayoon, to his palace and humiliated him on television for ordering a bloody military crackdown on demonstrations against his government.

The prime minister resigned.

In the later years of his reign in the 1980s and '90s, a largely rural Thailand was transformed by an economic explosion and then suffered the agony of financial collapse.

As industrial change and a consumer culture engulfed the nation, he advocated the ancient Buddhist values of self-sufficiency and moderation.

Away from his official duties, King Bhumibol has taken an interest in a range of development projects across the country. He was particularly passionate about developing a flood-control system to limit the annual inundation of some of the poorest areas of the capital, Bangkok. *AFP*

New York Times slams GMA in editorial: Dark Days for RP Democracy

From page A1

when they overthrew the Marcos dictatorship two decades ago.

Unfortunately, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has completely lost touch with the ideals that inspired that 1986 "people power" movement.

"Mrs. Arroyo is no Ferdinand Marcos, at least not yet. But this one-time reformer is reviving bad memories of crony corruption, presidential vote-rigging and intimidation of critical journalists. Unless the Philippine Congress and courts find ways to rein in her increasingly authoritarian tendencies, democracy itself may be in danger.

"This was not the outcome people expected five years ago when Mrs. Arroyo, then the vice president, was swept into power on a wave of popular discontent with her discredited predecessor, Joseph Estrada. In those days, Mrs. Arroyo, a professional economist, was seen as an earnest reformer. She won further credit by pledging not to run for a new six-year term in 2004.

"But then she changed her mind, and her style of government as well. Her narrow reelection victory became tainted after a tape revealed her discussing her vote totals with an election commissioner while ballots were still being counted. She survived an impeachment attempt over that incident. But she was forced to send her husband into exile over charges that he took bribes from gambling syndicates.

"Earlier this year she briefly declared a state of emergency in response to allegations of a coup threat that others disputed. Since then she has been intensifying pressure on a wide range of political critics and especially on the press. Government officials have warned news outlets that they will be held to restrictive new guidelines, the justice secretary talks darkly about a journalistic watch list, and the staff members of a well-known center for investigative journalism have been threatened with sedition charges. No Philippine government has made such efforts to muzzle the press since the Marcos era.

"President Bush has repeatedly hailed Mrs. Arroyo as an important ally against international terrorism. He now needs to warn her that by undermining a hard-won democracy, she is making her country far more vulnerable to terrorist pressures."

No Bhumibol to tell GMA it's time to go

From page A1

vened to avert a constitutional crisis—the first time since 1992, when protests in Bangkok against a military regime turned violent, killing scores of people.

The king received Thaksin after he shelved prior to the snap election an appeal by leaders of the political opposition for royal intervention to persuade Thaksin to step down, although the Thai press has not yet published what went on in this meeting.

Royal intervention constitutes one of Thailand's key conflict resolving institutions, not available to Filipinos who go to the Supreme Court to mediate in crises, as in the 2001 crisis, which was resolved in favor of Ms. Arroyo's accession to the presidency. Thaksin indicated that the country did not need an intensified political crisis as preparations were under way for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the reign of the revered King Bhumibol.

Prior to his fall, Thaksin had been embroiled in a constitutional crisis, a standoff in a democratic political system, from which Ms. Arroyo has not extricated herself.

Despite the differences in the dynamics of the Philippine and Thai democratic political systems, Ms Arroyo cannot escape the question of how much longer can she fend off pressures in different forms—including street-produced resignation demands, coup conspiracies and legislative action—to oust her before she considers stepping down.

The question has acquired acute urgency in the wake of Thaksin's resignation after being beleaguered the past three months by people power demonstrations in Bangkok.

In announcing his resignation, Thaksin accepted that continuing in office would trigger prolonged unrest despite his claim that his Thai Rak Thai party had won 57 percent of the vote and a reduced majority in parliament down from his landslide majority a year ago. In recognizing that holding on to power against the background of the boycott vote that blocks formation of a new government within 30 days, Thaksin implicitly conceded that a prolonged constitutional crisis provoked by the boycott vote, would make Thailand ungovernable and would make it difficult for him to govern effectively.

'Threshold of shame'

This realization could have marked Thaksin's threshold of pain and could have prompted him to quit. But Ms. Arroyo's threshold seems higher and harder to breach, if we go by her success in repealing all efforts to oust her.

Honest polls not issue

Far from resolving the crisis of the Thaksin government, sparked by a corruption scandal and accusations of abuse of power, the snap election results opened the gates of a messy constitutional gridlock posed by the boycott vote.

The honesty of the election was not an issue in the Thai snap polls, in contrast to the poll rigging issue which is at the root of the political unrest and resignation demands in Manila. So, we must have to emphasize this contrast.

Empty victory

Thaksin's apparent election victory, in terms of majorities in popular vote and parliamentary seats, was an empty victory because of the boycott vote. Indeed, these majorities ensured the return of his government and the dominance of Thaksin's party in parliament. Thai Rak Thai candidates ran unopposed in most constituencies. Based on the results the main opposition parties have been excluded from parliament.

These majorities, however, came unstuck when results in Bangkok and the south, strongholds of the three-party opposition coalition, show that in 38 constituencies out of a total of 500, candidates (mostly from Thaksin's party) failed to get the 20 percent of votes needed to qualify for seats in parliament. Under Thai election laws, elections are not completed unless all the 500 parliamentary seats are filled. A new parliament cannot form a government and elect a prime minister without meeting this requirement.

Before a new parliament can convene to form a new government by-elections must be held on April 23 in at least 39 constituencies where there was a failure to meet the minimum 20 percent. The election commission has announced opposition candidates can run in the by-election, although it is uncertain they will participate.

The opposition's boycott campaign was a success in that it caused the exit of Thaksin, which was the main objective of the demonstrations.

Thaksin stays as caretaker until parliament convenes and elects a new prime minister. But the opposition will have to contend with Thai Rak Thai party parliamentary majority.

Alternative leader

Indeed, as caretaker, Thaksin is considering a new leadership from his outgoing Cabinet key men, indicating continuing control of government by his party. There is therefore a viable alternative after Thaksin, in contrast to the Philippine crisis where a viable alternative to Ms. Arroyo if she is ousted or she resigns is not in sight, leaving a power vacuum. The Thais have used their electoral system to cover flanks after they made a big leap of leadership change with the resignation of Thaksin.

Leap in the dark

The Filipinos have not provided the safety net for themselves against disruptive and chaotic leadership change in the event of Ms. Arroyo's departure. They still have to get their act together to avoid a leap in the dark.

BUY ONE, TAKE ALL?!!

Being away from the Philippines has made me miss it so much more, and I've realized that having a Manila condo would be perfect for my regular visits back home. With so many hi-rise developments coming up in the city, from the biggest real estate giants to even smaller, lesser developers, it's so difficult to make a decision. All of them pretty much show you the same thing: a dazzling model unit, packed with all the bells and whistles, loaded with the most luxurious furniture, and designed by some famous interior decorator. What they don't tell you is that come turnover time, you get keys to a home that's nothing more than an empty shell!

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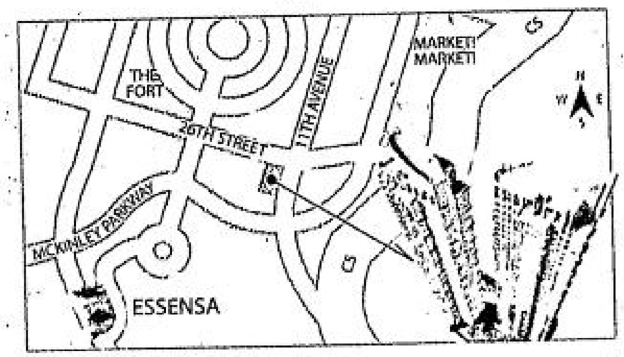
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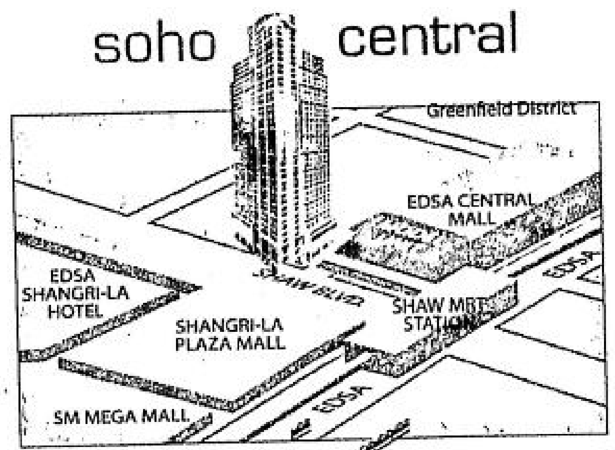
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No number coding for summer

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Jocelyn R. Uy

STARTING TODAY, MOTORISTS CAN take their cars out on any road in the metropolis this summer—anytime of the day, any day of the week—except in Makati City.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) announced yesterday that it is lifting the implementation of the Unified Vehicle Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) until June 2. The announcement came after 16 of the 17 Metro mayors signed the resolution calling for the lifting of the number coding scheme because of the fewer cars on the road during summer.

"Majority of the mayors signed the resolution so it's already approved. Number coding would be lifted until classes resume," said MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios.

Only Makati's Jejomar Binay did not sign the resolution as he said that the school break would have no effect on the volume of traffic in the financial district. Muntinlupa Mayor Jaime Fresnedi was one of the last to sign the resolution.

Fresnedi said he approved the lifting of the UVVRP in the city even though work had already begun on the rehabilitation of the Alabang Viaduct and South Luzon Expressway.

"Lifting the scheme in other cities would be pointless if it has not been suspended in other districts," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Fresnedi said alternate routes have already been mapped out for motorists, especially those who would pass through the Alabang interchange.

"The Philippine National Construction Corp. and the city's traffic

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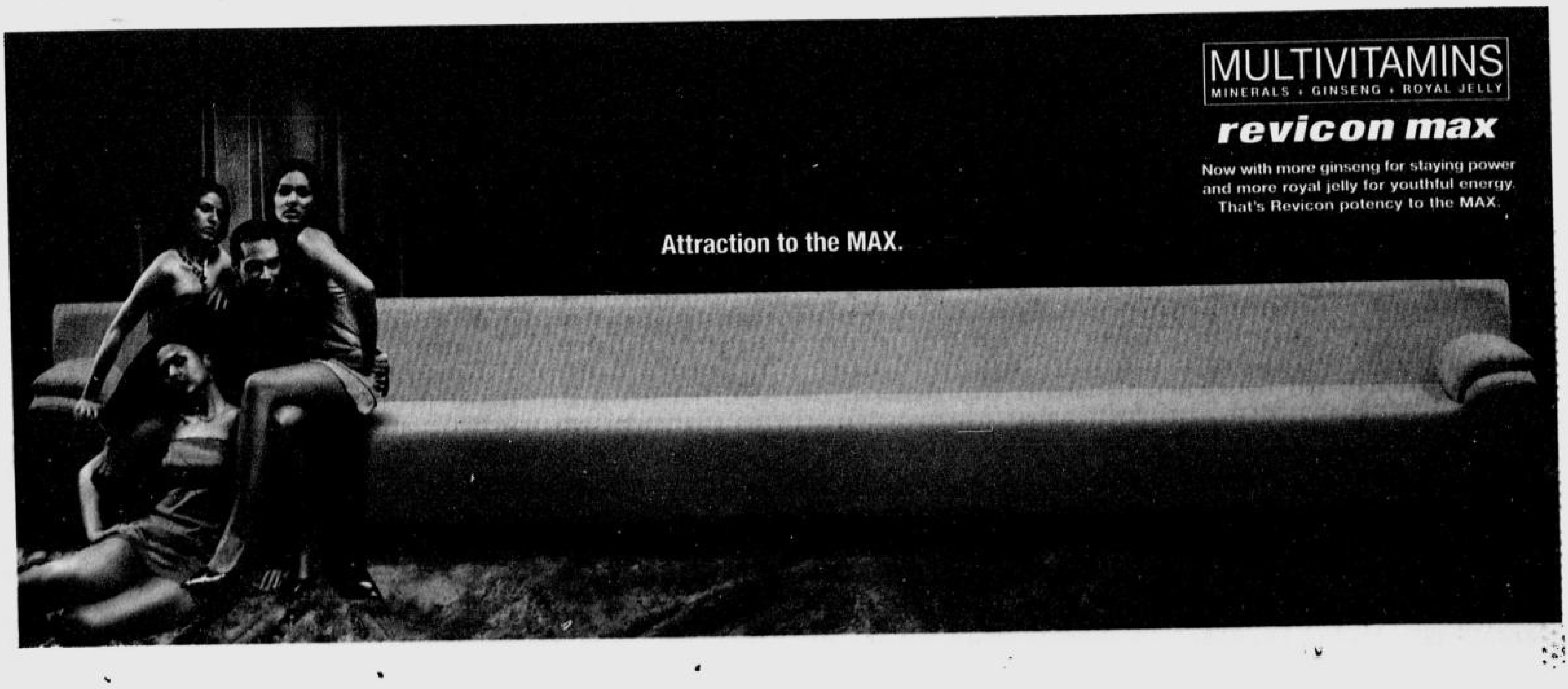
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15 suspects in aviation fuel pilferage charged

By Tina G. Santos

THE POLICE HAVE FILED QUALIfied theft charges against the 15 men who were caught with P250,000 worth of jet fuel allegedly stolen from a boat carrying Petron oil products.

Charged before the Manila Regional Trial Court were Arturo Salazar, Noel Pontejos, Arnold Bertolano, Rex Ramos, Exurey Edizer Diaz, George Bejelica, Reggie Malan, Pepito Cawaling, Danilo Gomez, Joven Malutao and Nenito Padon. The 11 were on board the M/T Dorothy Dos, a tanker authorized to carry fuel from Petron. Also charged were four men who worked as crew for FB Banoy identified as Tiburcio Labonite, Alfredo Inutan, Victor Borago and Romeo Alvarez.

The charges were filed by operatives from the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group who arrested the 15 suspects in Manila Bay last Saturday.

The suspects were caught in the act of stealing fuel from Petron which has long been complaining to the police about the theft of its products along the Bataan-Manila route.

When the police boarded the FB Banoy, they found 29 drums or 6,000 liters of Jet A-1 fuel worth P250,000.

Authorities said the boat was not authorized to carry Petron oil products.

Assistant City Prosecutor Dennis Morales said the crew of the MT Dorothy Dos had "acted with grave abuse of confidence" because as officers and employees of a marine vessel which had been hired by Petron, they had free access to the fuel.

No bail was recommended for the M/T Dorothy Dos crew while a P40,000 bail was set for each of the FB Banoy's four-man crew.

Woman trapped in burning house dies

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A 24-YEAR-OLD PREGNANT woman was killed after a two-hour fire swept through a crowded community in Taguig City shortly after midnight yesterday.

Ginna Dehomo, who was six months pregnant, died after she was trapped inside her burning house at the PNR Site in Barangay Western Bicutan, FO1 Agusto Bantawan told the INQUIRER.

Bantawan said the fire started at Dehomo's house at 12:43 a.m. yesterday.

The blaze broke out near the door, trapping the victim inside her house.

Possible sources

Quoting witnesses, Bantawan said the fire could have been caused by an unattended stove or a gas leak.

Witnesses said they heard an explosion before they saw fire eating up the victim's house.

The fire was put out at 2 a.m. after it reached the fifth alarm.

Twenty-nine houses and P1.5 million worth of property was destroyed in the incident which left 40 families homeless.

Not quick enough

The blaze spread quickly because the houses were made of light materials, said Bantawan.

But victims blamed the firemen, saying they did not immediately respond to their call for help. At least 17 fire trucks went to the scene of the fire yesterday.

COURTING LADY LUCK
Residents of Barangay Tejeros, Makati City while away the hours by playing bingo out on the street. JOAN BONDOC

Cops seek help in slay with suspects' sketches

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE MAKATI POLICE YESTERday asked the public for help in catching the three men who killed a former barangay *kagawad* (barangay council member) last week.

Makati Police District chief Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio released the artist's sketches of the three alleged suspects in the shooting of Edilmar Pancipane, a former kagawad of Barangay Rizal. "We have not yet identified the suspects. People might recognize them and lead us to identifying the suspects.. That's our purpose in releasing the sketches," Valerio said yesterday.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay earlier ordered a manhunt for the alleged killers of Pancipane, his political ally and personal friend.

Pancipane was shot to death by three men on March 29 on H. Santos Street, Barangay Tejeros in Makati City.

One suspect was at least 30 years old, around 5'10" in height, medium built, with his cropped curly hair hidden under a baseball cap, witnesses said.

The second was also at least 30 years old, 5'9" in height, stocky and round cheeks. The third was at least 20 years old, of medium built and with bangs.

Valerio said those who have any information about the suspects can call up his office at 8435851 or City Hall at 8701000.

The police had said that Pancipane's death may either be a case of political rivalry or mistaken identity.

The former barangay official had been recommended to take the place of Salvador Torrente, who was also killed in a shooting last year.

Win points for garbage in unique beauty tilt

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE TAGUIG CITY GOVERNMENT yesterday launched the search for "Ginang Kalikasan," a contest where contestants will not be judged by their looks but by the beauty of their surroundings and the amount of garbage they will be able to collect.

The competition, which is being spearheaded by Mayor Freddie Tinga's wife, Kaye, is in line with the city government's greening and waste segregation program.

"This is a one-of-its-kind beauty contest where a candidate's victory will depend on how well she and her neighbors strive to advance environmental protection in their barangay," City Hall said in a statement.

To win, the contenders—22 housewives from the city's 18 barangays—would have to collect garbage in their neighborhood, segregate recyclable materials and sell them to accredited junk shops.

The title will go to the candidate who would be able to raise the biggest amount of money from recycled garbage. Money generated by the pageant would be used to fund cleaning and greening activities in the winner's barangay.

A candidate who will be able to raise P5,000 from recyclable garbage would be entitled to 20 percent of the amount. The coronation night will be held in May.

No number coding for summer

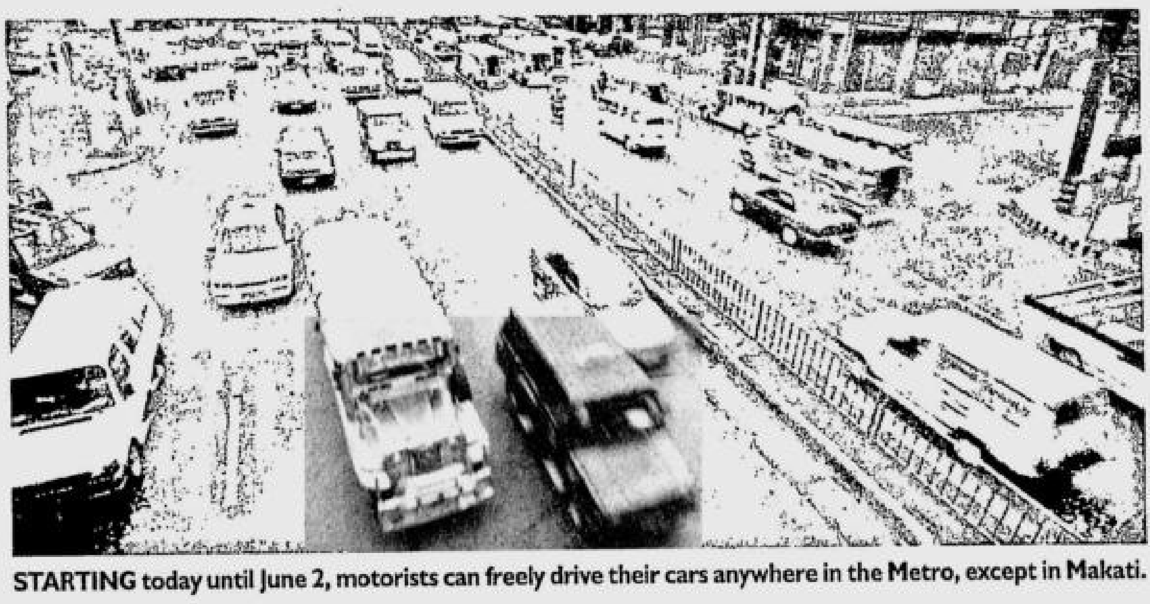
From page A19

bureau have come up with a plan to mitigate inconveniences that the rehabilitation might bring about to motorists," he added.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando earlier proposed the lifting of the UVVRP as studies showed a 30 percent decrease in vehicular volume on roads leading to school zones during the summer break.

The two-month suspension would be the longest period that the number-coding scheme would not be implemented in the metropolis.

Under the UVVRP, cars stay off the road on certain days of the week based on the last digit of their plate number.



PDI PHOTO

STARTING today until June 2, motorists can freely drive their cars anywhere in the Metro, except in Makati.

Erap, Ping and Jinggoy face indictment in US

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

FORMER PRESIDENT ERAP, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson will soon be indicted for espionage in the United States, according to a reliable source in government.

The three will be charged along with former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent Leandro Aragoncillo and former Senior Supt. Michael Ray Aquino. Both Aragoncillo and Aquino are now detained in the United States, awaiting trial.

Espionage in the United States carries the maximum penalty of death, according to my source.

The FBI traced the money trail that started from Erap, Jinggoy and Lacson and ended up at the doorstep of Aragoncillo, the source said.

Aquino acted as the conduit between the three and the former Filipino FBI agent.

In short, money was paid to Aragoncillo to obtain vital information about US policies in relation to the Philippines.

* * *

Extraditing the ousted Chief Executive and the two senators will become a ticklish issue.

The US-Philippine extradition treaty provides that a citizen of either party cannot be extradited if the penalty for a crime he's charged with is death.

Since espionage carries the death penalty, Erap and the two senators can't be extradited, according to my lawyer friend, citing the case of Rod Strunk who's charged with murdering his wife, actress Nida Blanca.

The US government will also have to wait for Erap to be acquitted of the plunder case against him. And if the former President gets convicted, he will have to serve out his term before the US government can ask for his extradition.

* * *

In the case of Senators Lacson and Estrada, they can't be extradited as long as they are "sitting senators," according to my lawyer-friend.

But if they go to the US after they are indicted in absentia, they will be promptly arrested. In short, Ping and Jinggoy can't go to the US while the espionage case against them is pending.

* * *

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno has ordered the relief of two officers of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) from customs duties after they were linked to extortion activities at the piers.

The officers have the ranks of superintendent (lieutenant colonel in the military) and chief inspector (major).

Although this column didn't name them, the two officers were allegedly involved in shaking down importers who were transporting cargo from the piers. For each container van, the officers charged P10,000.

Puno said the CIDG has no business apprehending cargo being taken out of the piers as that is the job of the Bureau of Customs. The CIDG's job, the interior secretary said, is to monitor outgoing cargoes, not apprehend them.

Puno was irked by reports that one of the sacked officers was using his name to extort money from importers.

* * *

Cell phone thieves and robbers are having a heyday at the expense of innocent citizens. The latest victim of these criminals was a former student of the University of the Philippines (Diliman) who was shot dead when she refused to hand over her cell phone during a holdup of an FX taxi.

Authorities can stop cell phone theft and robbery by closing down stores and pawnshops that buy and sell cellular phones of dubious origin. Most second-hand cell phones sold in stores and pawnshops are stolen.

Davao City has practically stopped cell phone holdups. Vigilantes execute the perpetrators, regardless of their age.

METROBRIEFS

Digging stopped in Pasig

THE POLICE yesterday stopped digging up a swamp after they failed to find the body of a man allegedly killed by illegal drug mart operators in Pasig City. The police had already gone beyond 10 feet and had created a hole with a diameter of over 15 feet before giving up the search for a certain "Bernardo." According to a state witness, there was an order to kill Bernardo and to bury his body in the swamp at the back of the compound in Sitio Mapayapa, Barangay Sto, Tomas, Pasig. The compound housed over 40 shanties being used as shabu dens. Yesterday, however, Billardo Torres, who claimed he was Bernardo, showed up at GMA-7's news program to deny the story. Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force special operations unit III deputy director Chief Insp. Ismael Fajardo, however, said they would still verify the man's claim.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

3 alleged cell phone thieves nabbed

THREE alleged cell phone thieves were arrested in Caloocan City yesterday after a woman, whom they were trying to sell a stolen cell phone to, turned out to be a relative of one of their victims. City police chief Supt. Virgilio Espija identified the suspects as Michael Tinio, Benito de Vera and Rodrigo Abobos. They were arrested inside a house in Barangay 175, Camarin, Caloocan. A day before their arrest, they allegedly robbed Gian Carlo Ruiz, a resident of Hillcrest Village, of his Nokia 3310 cell phone and P700 in cash. Yesterday, one of the suspects tried to sell the phone to Mercy Ruiz, unaware that she was the victim's aunt. "I recognized the cell phone so I pretended to be interested," the elder Ruiz said. When a check of the SIM card confirmed that it was the one which her nephew had lost, she called up barangay officials who immediately arrested the three men.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Traders killed in ambush

TWO Bulacan-based businessmen were killed in an ambush after attending a court hearing in Parañaque City before noon yesterday. Victorio delos Reyes, 40 and Danilo Elfa, 51, were declared dead on arrival at the Parañaque Medical Center, said city police chief Supt. Ronald Estilles. Initial investigation showed the two were on board a car near Dr. A. Santos Avenue (formerly Sucat Road) when three men fired upon the vehicle. Delos Reyes and Elfa were hit while their lawyer, Ruel Asobar, was unhurt. The unidentified killers, whom witnesses described as "young-looking" and about 5'4 to 5'6 in height, escaped. Witnesses said they saw the suspects standing in front of a bakeshop at the corner of Sucat Road and San Antonio Avenue before the shooting occurred. The victims, Estilles said, had just come from the Parañaque City Hall to attend a hearing of the case filed against Delos Reyes by his former lawyer for nonpayment of legal fees. Elfa had testified at the hearing. The police said a land dispute could also be a motive behind the killing. The victims' bodies were brought to the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory for autopsy.

Jocelyn R. Uy

Vemma product launch on April 8

AIGS Marketing Corp., the exclusive distributor of Vemma products in the country, will hold a product launch on April 8 at the Legend Villas Hotel on Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City. Guest speakers from Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the United States will talk about Vemma products and the firm's nutritional wellness program. Those who are interested may also call 6873016, 6873018 or 0918-7931863 or e-mail joey@aigsph.com or promo@aigsph.com.

PIMPINAN UNIT KERJA SPSI
MENYATAKAN
TENTANG
KETENAGA KERJAAN

INDONESIAN workers march toward the presidential palace during a mass rally in Jakarta, Indonesia, Wednesday, April 5. AP

Thousands protest labor law change in Indonesia

JAKARTA—THOUSANDS OF INDONESIANS rallied across the world's fourth-most-populous country on Wednesday to protest against a parliamentary move to revise employment laws.

Employers have complained that Indonesia's 2003 labour bill gave workers so many benefits and so much freedom to organise and strike that it dealt a blow to the country's economic competitiveness and its attractiveness to investors.

The 2003 bill was a product of the country's first democratic parliament after the 1998 fall of autocratic President Suharto. Suharto had kept unions on a tight leash, but the business community says the new law went too far the other way.

The current parliament, elected in 2004, plans to amend the bill to give employers more flexibility, curb strikes and soften regulations on severance payment for dismissed workers.

Trade unions argue the revisions ignore the plight of workers and have vowed to keep protesting to pressure parliament into leaving the law unchanged.

On Wednesday, around 10,000 workers marched on major streets in Jakarta, creating traffic congestion and blocking the capital's special lanes for public transport.

One slogan on the banners unfurled by the protesters, who included bank employees and workers at foreign-owned factories, read: "Hey, businessmen and leaders who have the hearts of devils, cancel those revisions." The protesters also passed out pamphlets saying the revisions could allow "employers to fire workers without reason." The march stopped in front of Vice President Jusuf Kalla's office and a small group of protesters was allowed to meet him.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was on a trip outside Jakarta.

"We want to find a good solution for the workers and the business world in Indonesia. We do not intend to pressure the workers and make their lives difficult," Kalla told reporters after the meeting.

But rally leaders were not satisfied with their meeting.

"Up until now, there has been no firm statement. We will only say we are satisfied if the government pulls back the proposed revisions," said Abdul Gani, a union leader from the industrial city of Tangerang.

Similar rallies with thousands of participants were staged in at least five other cities in Indonesia, including on the industrial island of Batam, near Singapore, where protesters showered a government office with rocks. *Reuters*

Thaksin may be down, but regime still alive

THAKSIN SHINAWATRA MAY BE DOWN, BUT he is not out yet. He may step aside, but his regime is alive and kicking.

After his audience with His Majesty the King on Tuesday, Thaksin surprised the country by announcing he would step aside and would not seek the post of prime minister in the next government.

Thaksin also made it clear that he would not wash his hands off politics as he would serve as an MP and continue as leader of his Thai Rak Thai Party.

Former Democrat Party leader Chuan Leekpai noted, "Thaksin's decision to step aside does not help the democratic process move on. Nobody is certain when Parliament will have all 500 MPs. Moreover, the Thaksin regime is still alive.

"We should not be alarmed or happy with his decision to step aside because we have to see whether the Thaksin regime is still around or not. If he is gone, but the practices of Thaksin remain in place then evils in our society will continue.

"These include tax avoidance, budget allocation to constituencies that vote Thai Rak Thai and dominance over independent institutions. It will be dangerous to the country if the Thaksin regime fortifies its roots."

The April 2 election, which was boycotted by the opposition parties, turned out to be a referendum on Thaksin. The Thai Rak Thai garnered about 16 million votes, but there were 10 million votes of "abstain"—"no" votes against Thaksin and his party. The number of spoiled ballots almost reached 2 million. This indicated that, unlike the previous two elections, Thaksin failed to win a mandate this time.

Calls for Thaksin to resign unconditionally from politics began about three months ago, immediately after his family's tax free sale of Shin Corp. to Temasek Holdings of Singapore for Bt73.3 billion. Thaksin's political fortunes have quickly tumbled. The People's Alliance for Democracy staged a series of rallies to expose the alleged corruption, nepotism, and abuse of power. Academics, students, the middle class and entrepreneurs joined the anti-Thaksin rallies, forcing the former telecom tycoon to dissolve Parliament.

But this did not satisfy urban voters who demanded that Thaksin leave the political scene completely. They made their voices heard at the polls on Sunday, stunning the Thai Rak Thai Party.

Thaksin has been making a series of tactical retreats, which culminated with Tuesday's announcement.

Thaksin told his Cabinet on Tuesday that he had to step aside temporarily, otherwise people would make such an issue of his presence that it would be impossible to convene Parliament.

Still, Thaksin yesterday signaled another retreat by moving out of Government House and appointing Chidchai Wannasathid, first deputy prime minister, to run the government during the transition period.

Now, Thaksin has really backed off in order to make a comeback. During this time, according to a political source, he will rest and travel to find some fresh ideas.

After the political reform process is completed, he can make a comeback. Then he will write a second chapter of The Thaksin Era. *The Nation/Asia News Network*

Koizumi becomes 3rd longest serving premier

TOKYO—JUNICHIRO KOIZUMI ON WEDnesday became Japan's third longest-serving premier since World War II, presiding over an economic recovery but letting relations deteriorate with Asian neighbors.

Koizumi, whose flamboyant style has broken the mold of Japanese politics, has been prime minister for 1,806 days, the same amount of time as Yasuhiro Nakasone who served from 1982 to 1987. He will surpass him Thursday.

"The reason why a mediocre person like me could manage to do the prime minister's job so long is because of the cooperation of the Japanese people and luck," Koizumi told reporters in his trademark tongue-in-cheek humor.

Koizumi, 64, took office in April 2001 and plans to retire in September, despite remaining popular and winning a landslide in last year's election he cast as a battle to break up the post office monopoly and shake up the world's second-largest economy.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, a frontrunner to be the next premier, said Tuesday that Koizumi's long tenure "must be a result of offering clear policy objectives and explaining them to people in a plain language." But the Yomiuri Shimbun, Japan's best-selling daily, questioned whether Koizumi should get credit for the economy, which a slew of data show to be rebounding from more than a decade of zero or negative growth.

"It's true the economy recovered in the past five years of the Koizumi cabinet. But is it the result of 'reform'?" asked a Yomiuri editorial, which credited efforts by the private sector.

The Yomiuri faulted Koizumi for his annual pilgrimage to Yasukuni shrine, which honors Japanese war dead including war criminals. China has refused dialogue with Koizumi due to the shrine, which it considers a symbol of militarism.

"The prime minister's obsession with the pilgrimage to Yasukuni shrine has led to worsening relationships with China and South Korea. As a result, Japan cannot operate a strategic Asian diplomacy," the newspaper said.

Koizumi, with his distinctive mane of salt-and-pepper hair and passion for music, has succeeded in casting himself as unbothered at upsetting traditional bases of his Liberal Democratic Party—from post offices to the construction industry.

"He showed an attitude that he is ready to wage war against his own party for the sake of long-awaited political and economic reform," said Harumi Arima, a political analyst who used to be a secretary for an LDP lower house member. *AFP*

KOIZUMI AFP

'Missing link' fossil shows how animals moved from sea to land

PARIS—IN THE BEGINNING, there was the sea... and little by little, the fish in the sea moved on to the land, evolving into the myriad species of animals that have lived, eaten or been eaten, fought and died on terra firma for more than 300 million years.

But when did these extraordinary events take place? And how did they happen? How did fish develop the ability to support the weight of their body out of water and to move around on land?

The answers, say American paleontologists, lie in astonishingly detailed fossils that have been coaxed out of ancient rock just a thousand kilometers from the North Pole.

There, buried in river sediments on Ellesmere Island in Canada's Nunavut, the team unearthed the preserved remains of what is described as the "missing evolutionary link" between fish and tetrapods, the four-footed animals that emerged from water.

The newly-discovered species, dubbed Tiktaalik roseae, looks superficially like a crocodile, with a skull around 20 cm long.

Its flattened body, which probably grew to a length of between 1.25 and 2.75 meters, was covered in diamond-shaped bony scales.

It is like a fish, with its primitive jaw and fins, but has a tetrapod's neck and ribs.

What is generating the most excitement are joints in the fish's pectoral fins, which have bones that compare to the upper arm, forearm and primitive parts of the hand of land-living animals.

"Most of the major joints of the fin are functional in this fish," said Neil Shubin, a professor of organismal biology at the University of Chicago and co-leader of the expedition, whose findings appear on Thursday in Nature, the British science weekly.

"The shoulder, elbow and even parts of the wrist are already there and working in ways similar to the earliest land-living animals." The sediment in which Tiktaalik was found has been dated to around 375 million years ago, in the swampy primeval era known as the Devonian.

At that time, what is now frigid Arctic Canada had a balmy, sub-tropical climate, for it was part of a mega-continent that straddled the equator.

Shubin believes that Tiktaalik's size and shape indicates that it was fitted for living in small streams in a delta system—an environment that probably encouraged the fish to venture into shallow water or even make forays onto land in search of food or shelter from predators. *AFP*

Muslim scholars call for end to boycott of Danish products

DUBAI—A GROUP OF PROMINENT MUSLIM scholars has called for ending a boycott on a Danish food products company over the publication in Denmark of derogatory cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

In a statement issued over the weekend, the International Conference for the Support of the Final Prophet, made up of influential Muslim scholars including Youssef al-Qaradawi of Egypt and Salman al Awda, a Saudi cleric, advised that the company, Arla Foods, "should be withdrawn from the boycott on Denmark" in recognition of the company's efforts at reaching out to the Muslim world.

Arla placed full-page ads in major Arab newspapers last week condemning the cartoons as an insult to Islam, a move that was criticized in Denmark while it was applauded in some Middle Eastern countries.

"We made the decision to make this statement because we really believe that you shouldn't insult people's religions," said Jan Petersen, regional director for Arla Foods Middle East. "As a company we have been caught in the middle of something that nobody could have ever expected."

Arla's dairy products, which disappeared from store shelves when the boycott began in early February, reappeared in some stores in Dubai, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf countries on Tuesday, according to regional distributors.

"We are extremely pleased about this situation," said Thomas May, the Danish consul general in Dubai. "Taking product companies as hostages has never been a solution. I am glad to see that things are getting back to normal." May said the resolution was the product of weeks of dialogue between Danish representatives and businessmen and Muslim leaders.

But many retailers in Dubai and neighboring emirates said they intended to keep Danish goods, including Arla's, off their shelves. *New York Times News Service*

Yo-Yo Ma seeks easier visa rules

WASHINGTON—RENOWNED CHINESE-American cellist Yo-Yo Ma joined the roiling debate on US immigration Tuesday, testifying before a congressional committee about the harm of increasingly strict entry regulations on international artists.

The French-born musician testified Tuesday before the House of Representatives' Government Reform Committee about how delays in visa processing hurts artists visiting from overseas.

"I'm 50 years old. I've played the cello for 46 years. Of the last 30 years of being a professional musician, I've spent the equivalent of 20 on the road," Ma told the House Governmental Reform Committee.

"Music and travel are constants for me," he said. "In my mind, they stem from the same fundamentally human sources: an eagerness to explore new territory and a passion for learning."

But Ma, who is the artistic director of the non-profit "Silk Road Project," a multicultural collaboration drawing on the talents of leading international artists, said stricter travel rules have made it difficult to get foreign performers into the United States.

He said increasingly international artists have been unable to obtain a visa in time for cultural performances and events.

"The barriers to bringing these musicians, these cultural guides, to the US have become extraordinarily high," he said.

"We ... have found it increasingly difficult to facilitate this cultural exchange, because of high financial costs, uncertain timelines, and countless logistical hurdles," he said. *AFP*

Iraq court charges Saddam with genocide vs Kurds

BAGHDAD—THE IRAQI COURT TRYing Saddam Hussein announced Tuesday that it had charged him with genocide, saying he had sought to annihilate the Kurdish people in 1988, when the military killed at least 50,000 Kurdish civilians and destroyed 2,000 villages.

The case is the first against Saddam to address the large-scale human rights violations committed during his decades in power, the same acts the Bush administration has publicized in explaining the US invasion of Iraq.

Six other defendants also face charges. Saddam is already being tried for the torture and killings of 148 men and boys in the Shiite village of Dujail.

Since the United Nations adopted the genocide convention in 1948, very few courts have charged defendants with genocide, the attempt to annihilate an ethnic, religious, national or political group in whole or in part.

Convictions have been handed down in the tribunals for Rwanda and Yugoslavia. This is the first time that a Middle Eastern ruler has been charged with it.

"It was during this campaign that thousands of women, children and men were buried in mass graves in many locations," Raid Juhi, the chief judge of the Iraqi High Tribunal's investigative court, said at a news conference.

Juhi said it would be up to other judges to decide when the genocide trial against Saddam would start, and whether it would overlap with the Dujail case.

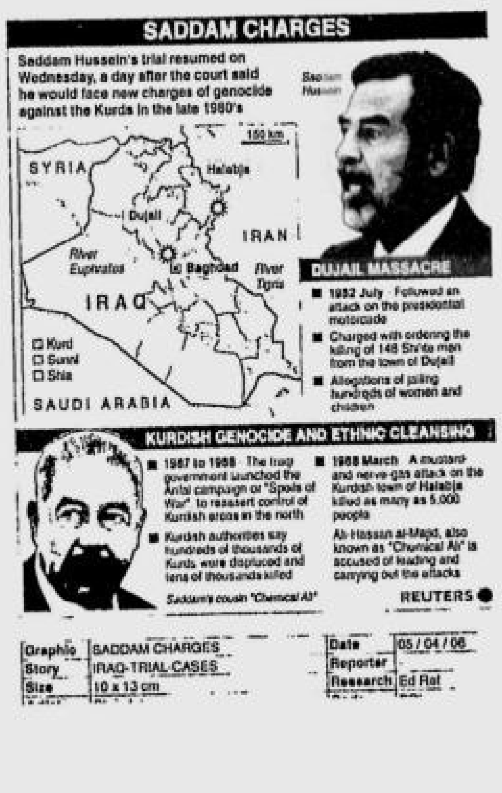
The court defines the bloody Anfal campaign as eight military operations in 1988 in the Kurdish homeland of northern Iraq. Families who escaped death squads or were allowed to live were forced to relocate into the hinterlands or in neighboring countries. The Kurds tried to fight back, but Saddam used chemical weapons.

Juhi said the court had gathered enough evidence, like documents and mass graves, to prosecute the defendants in the deaths of at least 50,000 civilians. Kurdish officials and human rights advocates said the death toll had been much higher. They also said the Anfal campaign began years earlier, with other massacres and forced migrations.

All parties agree that at the very least, hundreds of thousands were arrested, tortured, relocated or killed.

All seven defendants are charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes related to an internal armed conflict. *New York Times News Service*

SADDAM REUTERS



SADDAM CHARGES

Saddam Hussein's trial resumed on Wednesday, a day after the court said he would face new charges of genocide against the Kurds in the late 1980's

DUJAIL MASSACRE

- 1982 July Followed an attack on the presidential motorcade
- Charged with ordering the killing of 148 Shiite men from the town of Dujail
- Allegations of jailing hundreds of women and children

KURDISH GENOCIDE AND ETHNIC CLEANSING

- 1987 to 1988 The Iraqi government launched the Anfal campaign or "Spoils of War" to reassert control of Kurdish areas in the north
- Kurdish authorities say hundreds of thousands of Kurds were displaced and tens of thousands killed
- 1988 March A mustard- and nerve-gas attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja killed as many as 5,000 people

Ali Hassan al-Majid, also known as "Chemical Ali" is accused of leading and carrying out the attacks

Saddam's cousin "Chemical Ali"

REUTERS

Graphic SADDAM CHARGES
Story IRAQ-TRIAL-CASES
Size 10 x 13 cm
Date 05 / 04 / 06
Reporter
Research Ed Rat

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

US Homeland Security exec nabbed in sex sting

WASHINGTON—THE DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY for the US Department of Homeland Security has been arrested in a sex sting operation on charges of trying to seduce someone he believed to be a 14-year-old girl, Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said on Tuesday.

Brian Doyle, 55, faces 23 charges in Polk County, Florida, related to use of a computer to seduce a child and transmitting harmful material to a minor, Judd said in a statement.

Doyle was taken into custody at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland, outside Washington, on Tuesday evening while he was on the line with undercover detectives, Judd said.

"He was on his computer communicating with the undercover detective who he believed to be a 14-year-old girl at the time we knocked on his door in Maryland, took him into custody and served a search warrant," Judd said in an interview on CNN.

The statement said Doyle on March 12 contacted a 14-year-old girl whose profile was posted on the Internet and initiated a sexually explicit conversation. The "girl" was actually an undercover Polk County detective.

In subsequent conversations, Doyle gave the undercover detective his office phone number and his government-issued cell phone number. The statement alleged that the official Doyle used the Internet to send pornographic movie clips to the "girl" and had explicit sexual conversations in online chats with "her," the statement said.

DOYLE

According to the statement, Doyle also had sexually explicit telephone conversations with a detective posing as a child on his office telephone and cell phone.

Many of the conversations with the "victim" were too graphic for public release, the statement said.

"There is no question that Doyle believed that he was having these disgusting, obscene discussions, online and on the phone, with a young girl," Judd said.

"What stands out to me the most in this particular case was the fact that Brian, on his first conversation with our undercover detective, who he believed to be a 14-year-old girl, clearly identified himself as a deputy press secretary for Homeland Security," Judd told CNN.

"If he would provide that kind of information to include a photograph of himself with his identification tags, who else may he be talking to around the world who he thinks to be a 14-year-old girl?" Judd said.

The sheriff said Doyle already faces 23 felony counts in the state of Florida and could face charges in a federal investigation now underway. *Reuters*

COSMIC DUST
Nasa's Hubble Space Telescope photographed dense knots of dust and gas in our Milky Way Galaxy. This cosmic dust is a concentration of elements that are responsible for the formation of stars. AP

Thai stocks, baht soar on Thaksin's resignation

BANGKOK—THAI SHARE PRICES closed 3.05 percent higher on Wednesday amid hopes that Premier Thaksin Shinawatra's surprise resignation announcement would end the country's prolonged political crisis, dealers said.

They said investors took heart from the news after trading with caution in the past two months due to the deadlock over the leadership of Thaksin, who is accused of abuse of power and corruption.

The Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) composite index jumped 22.74 points to 768.07 and the bluechip SET 50 index gained 18.37 points to 536.94.

Thaksin, having defied opposition protests and demands he resign for several months, shocked everyone late Tuesday when he said he would step down following a brief meeting with revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

The immediate reaction in the markets and among commentators has been largely positive although considerable uncertainties remain, not least as to how the country is to be governed pending the convening of parliament.

"It is a good start, creating a clearer picture in the eyes of investors and will restore their confidence in the Thai economy," said Pramon Suthiwong, chair of the Board of Trade business group.

"Thai businesses also feel greatly relieved and we think that consumer confidence could rebound very soon if the democratic system works more smoothly from now on," Pramon told AFP.

He said Thaksin's decision would pave the way for opposition parties to join a new cabinet to move forward political reforms. *AFP*

Jesus may have walked on ice, not on water – study

MIAMI—THE NEW TESTAMENT says that Jesus walked on water, but a Florida university professor believes there could be a less miraculous explanation—he walked on a floating piece of ice.

Professor Doron Nof also theorized in the early 1990s that Moses's parting of the Red Sea had solid science behind it.

Nof, a professor of oceanography at Florida State University, said on Tuesday that his study found an unusual combination of water and atmospheric conditions in what is now northern Israel could have led to ice formation on the Sea of Galilee.

Nof used records of the Mediterranean Sea's surface temperatures and statistical models to examine the dynamics of the Sea of Galilee, which Israelis know now as Lake Kinneret.

The study found that a period of cooler temperatures in the area between 1,500 and 2,600 years ago could have included the decades in which Jesus lived. *Reuters*

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GOLF: 2006 US Masters; Preview; tomorrow at 3 a.m.; First Round; tomorrow at 4 a.m.; STAR Sports – Tiger Woods' quest for a fifth green jacket begins. Kraft Nabisco LPGA Championship; 8 a.m. (r); ESPN – Take another look at the final round. Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Compiled by L. Manguiat

SPORTS

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

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Baumann to Eala: 'Stay the course' in cage row

Pilipinas Basketball fails to get approval

By Ernesto Gonzales

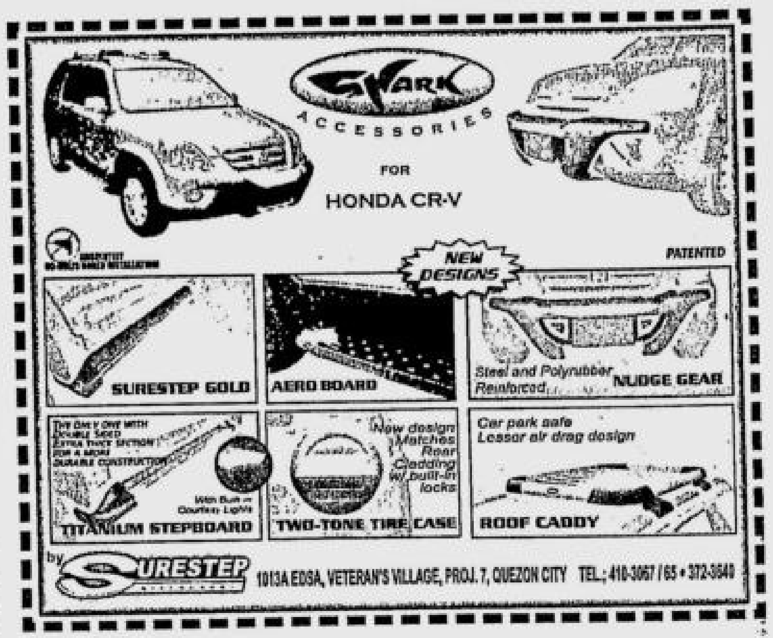
SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—THE KEY TO ousting the Basketball Association of the Philippines from the world basketball federation (Fiba) is to prove it no longer has the membership and the authority to run the sport in the country.

"Stay the course," Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann told the six representatives of the four major stakeholders yesterday during a meeting where he finally acknowledged their efforts to put up a new cage group to replace BAP.

"You just have to be persistent (in pursuing your case)," added Baumann after he was briefed for the second time in the day of the general disenchantment with the BAP that led to the association's expulsion from the Philippine Olympic Committee last year.

The expulsion led to a Fiba ban on all RP inter-

BAUMANN/ A24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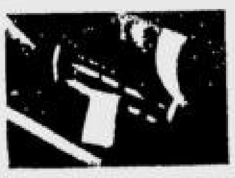
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Fiba sec-gen receptive to lifting suspension

EALA: Ever hopeful

By Al S. Mendoza

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—"STAY THE course."

Almost emphatically, three times Patrick Baumann told PBA Commissioner Noli Eala that on Tuesday night at the COEX Intercontinental Hotel here.

The youthful Baumann, the secretary general of the World Basketball Federation (Fiba), told Eala and three other basketball stakeholders in the Philippines he was now receptive to lifting the country's basketball suspension "in due time."

Eala motored direct from the airport to the closed-door meeting with Baumann in the company of fellow basketball stakeholders PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad, UAAP's Jun Jun Capistrano and NCAA's Paul Supan. They were backstopped by Ding Tanjuatco, the legal counsel of the Philippine Olympic Committee.

The delegation that exerted gargantuan efforts to make Baumann lift the Fiba's basketball suspension of the Philippines included PBA Chair Ely Capacio and PBA Vice Chair Ricky Vargas of Talk 'N Text.

There was a marked softening of stand exhibited by Baumann during his meeting with Eala's delegation, historic indeed for its sheer impact on a nation whose favorite pastime for more than half a century has been basketball.

About six hours earlier, Baumann had adopted an almost unbending position when the Philippines pleaded its case to the Fiba through Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco Jr.

With Cojuangco were POC first vice president Monico Puentevella, POC secretary general Steve Hontiveros and Tanjuatco in the noontime meeting with Baumann that also included Fiba hall of famer Boris Stankovic, Baumann's predecessor.

"Just keep pursuing your process of reorganizing Philippine basketball," Baumann told Eala. "We are now studying all angles. But it's really up to you to work it all out so that the Philippines can return to the graces of Fiba. We'd love to see that happen in the shortest possible time."

He said the "fastest way really" to have the Philippines back in good standing with the Fiba is to have "Mr. Joey Lina sign the statutes" for the creation of a new basketball association, the Pilipinas Basketball.

Cojuangco stayed out of the first-ever encounter between Baumann and Eala, electing to wait by a table just outside the door of the closed-door meeting, eating two scoops of strawberry ice cream midway into the wait in the company of Hontiveros and Iggy Vitales, the POC president's chief sports ally in America.

"I have said everything that needed to be said in our meeting with Baumann," said Cojuangco. "I am hopeful Baumann's meeting with our four major stakeholders would produce positive results."

Eala said he was impressed with Baumann, who is a lawyer like him.

"He is very young and yet, he exudes near-flawless confidence and a conviction of a seasoned leader," said Eala, who invited Baumann to be the guest of honor in the Oct. 1 opening of the next PBA season. "He said he was honored to be invited and I assured him the PBA and our millions of Filipino basketball fans will surely be delighted to see him come."

Newly elected Fiba president Bob Elphinston of Australia was with Baumann during the meeting with Eala & Co.

"It's a step in the right direction," said Elphinston of the meeting between Baumann and Eala's group. "We in Australia, and of course in the Fiba as a whole, would want the Philippines back into the Fiba fold. I'm optimistic it would happen soon. The Philippines is such a very popular country for its distinct love affair with basketball."

Baumann to Eala: 'Stay the course'

From page A23

national participation except in the Jones Cup in Taiwan and, hopefully, the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, since the Asiad is under the jurisdiction of the Olympic Council of Asia.

Earlier, Baumann, accompanied by Fiba secretary general emeritus Borislav Stankovic, acted like a spoiled brat during a meeting with top POC officials led by president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, insisting that the POC recommendation for a new cage body did not have the approval of the fifth stakeholder, BAP president Joey Lina.

But Baumann, a young lawyer from Switzerland, was not only civil, but responsive as well, when he came face to face for the first time with PBA chair Ely Capacio, commissioner Noli Eala and PBA governor Ricky Vargas, PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad, Jose Capistrano Jr. of the UAAP and Paul Supan of the NCAA.

POC officials couldn't help but point to an earlier meeting by Cojuangco with International Olympic Committee president Joaquin Rogge as reason for Baumann's quick change of attitude.

In that meeting, Rogge promised full support to the POC in its campaign to uphold its right to sack a recalcitrant national sports association.

While the four stakeholders failed to get immediate approval from Baumann to have their "baby" Pilipinas Basketball as replacement for BAP, Eala said the group was satisfied that the problem was laid out before Baumann.

He said efforts will be made to muster nationwide support for Pilipinas Basketball from all leagues and organizations throughout the country and leave BAP worthless and without any clout.

Baumann said unless the BAP is expelled from the Fiba, the world cage body cannot accept a replacement.

At the same time, Cojuangco said he would ask the Philippine Sports Commission to withdraw all support for the BAP and have the association vacate its office at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

For his part, POC vice president Monico Puentevella said he would also request Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita to declare BAP as an illegitimate body.

Spring Oil, King's Bakeshop prevail

DEFENDING CHAMPION SPRING COOKING Oil and King's Bakeshop took different routes in beating their respective rivals in the 2006 Picaa Open basketball tournament at the EAC gym in Manila.

Spring routed University of the Philippines-Mighty Filter Kings, 76-60, to keep the solo lead with its third straight win in this six-team, double-round tournament sponsored by Chloe Lightings and Tomish Cafe.

King's Baekshop bested Homer Cagers, 85-80, in overtime behind the heroics of Rommel David.

Former National University standout Ariel de Castro scattered 18 points and two other mainstays also scored in double figures for the Cooking Oil Masters of national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and coach Efren "Yong" Garcia.

Backing up De Castro were Rodel Manuel and Mario Reyes with 16 and 12 points, respectively.

Unlikely duo lifts Tigers past Bulls

COCA-COLA'S Billy Mamaril gets hit in the head by Red Bull's Paolo Bugia as he attacks the hoop in last night's game. ERIK ARAZAS

GAMES TOMORROW (*Ynares Center*)
4:40 p.m.—Purefoods vs San Miguel Beer
7:35 p.m.—Alaska vs Sta. Lucia Realty

By June Navarro

ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT, ANYBODY COULD sparkle for the Coca-Cola Tigers.

Dennis Miranda and Will Antonio rose to the occasion this time around as the Tigers squeezed past Red Bull, 89-85, to gain a share of the lead with San Miguel Beer last night in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Miranda tallied a career-high 21 points on seven of 10 field-goal shooting while Antonio, normally Coca-Cola's gunslinger, ditched his offensive role for a less glamorous but still important duty, pulling down a career-best 18 rebounds.

"We don't have a go-to guy," said Coca-Cola coach Binky Favis, seeking to become the second rookie coach to call the shots in the All-Star game to be held in Cagayan de Oro at the end of the month. "That's our strength because anybody can shine in any game."

"Out of nowhere, somebody will pick up [his game in] a [particular] department for us just like what Will did," he added.

By avoiding a third straight defeat, the Tigers improved to 5-2, tying the Beermen and Purefoods at the top of the heap. The Bulls dropped to 3-4.

The Giants reached the top when they got firepower from almost everybody in the roster in a 105-94 whipping of Air21 in the second game.

"Honestly, I don't think about coaching in the All-Star," said Favis. "There are a lot of things to do for the team rather than ponder about it."

Should the Tigers beat Sta. Lucia on Sunday, Favis will become the first rookie coach to handle an All-Star team since Sta. Lucia mentor Alfrancis Chua in 1999.

Eight players scored in double figures for the Giants, led by the 18 of James Yap and the 16 of Marc Pingris, who also had 14 boards.

The Express dropped to 3-5.

The scores:

First Game

COCA-COLA 89—Miranda 21, Mamaril 18, Peek 14, Reavis 11, Arigo 8, Singson 7, Antonio 6, Abarrientos 4, Wainwright 0.

RED BULL 85—Fonacier 19, Tugade 19, Pennisi 19, Baguio 9, Valenzuela 8, Feihl 4, Najorda 2, Bugia 2, Robinson 2, Villaneuva 1, Alvarez 0, Cruz 0.

Quarters: 21-18, 41-37, 66-59, 89-85.

Second Game

PUREFOODS 105—J. Yap 18, Pingris 16, Raymundo 14, Castillo 14, Artadi 13, Tejada 10, Limpot 10, R. Yap 0, Evangelista 0.

AIR21 94—Ritualo 23, Tubid 22, Telan 17, Canaleta 9, R. De Ocampo 7, Y. De Ocampo 7, Arboleda 7, Se 2, Dacia 0, Bemardo 0, Fran 0.

Quarters: 25-14, 54-35, 78-57, 105-94

Lakandula booters win

By Marc Anthony Reyes

GAGALANGIN'S LAKANDULA HIGH SCHOOL won its first ever gold medal after its girls football team swept the opposition yesterday in the 5th Manila Youth Games at the sunbaked Luneta ballpark.

Lakandula beat Roxas de Ayala (3-0) and F.G. Calderon (2-0) before completing its hat trick with a 4-0 victory over Isabelo delos Reyes to claim the girls 12-under football title in the week-long event organized by the Manila Sports Council.

F.G. Calderon notched a 1-1-1 win-loss-draw tally to nail second place, while Isabelo Delos Reyes bagged the bronze medal with a similar slate.

Dapitan maintained its clutch of the overall lead in a slow day, gaining just one gold after the Dapitan Football Club shut out Ka-Maynila, 2-0 for the boys 8-under gold. Sta. Ana settled for the bronze medal.

Velasquez managed to snare two golds in football after Barangay 110 whipped Dapitan Football Camp, 2-1, for the boys 12-under title, and Juan Nolasco-A drubbed Juan Nolasco B, 2-0, in the boys 17-under.

San Andres Complex of Malate settled for bronze in the 12-under after a 2-0 victory over District 1, while winning the same medal in the 17-under via a 1-0 win over Boystown-Manila.

Don Bosco's Magat Salamat edged Aurora A. Quezon of Malate, 2-1, to capture the boys 12-under. Lakandula came up with the bronze after a 3-1 shoot-out triumph over Sta. Ana.

Chess Olympiad berths staked in national meet

THREE SLOTS IN THE MEN'S TEAM and five in the women's side for the Philippines to the 2006 World Chess Olympiad will be disputed starting today in the National Chess Championship at the Market Place Shopping Mall in Mandaluyong.

The Olympiad will be held May 19 to June 5 in Turin, Italy.

Grandmasters Mark Paragua, the country's top-ranked player with an Elo of 2617, Eugene Torre (2543) and Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr. (2539) earned outright seeding to the men's team as agreed upon by the organizing National Chess Federation of the Philippines board.

Members that will complete the men's team will be decided after the National championship, which will be either an 11- or 13-round Swiss depending on the number of participants.

Women International Masters Sheerie Joy Lomibao (Elo 2163), Beverly Mendoza (2132) and Cristine Rose Mariano (2081) are the big guns entered in the women's competition. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Rising star Gomez joins Korean 9-ball invitational

PROMISING BILLIARDS PLAYER Robert Gomez Jr. will see action in the tough 2006 Korean 9-Ball Invitational set April 25.

Businessman and sports patron Perry Mariano will bankroll the participation of Gomez in the prestigious event to give his ward the necessary international exposure to sharpen his skills.

The 27-year-old Gomez, a veteran of many local tournaments such as the Hope· P1 Million Tournament and Philippine 9-Ball Open, is one of the five players whom Mariano manages.

World Bar Tour and US Bar Box champion Dennis Orcollo, SEA Games gold medalists Antonio Gabica and Ronnie Alcano and former Asian Games champion Gandy Valle are the others in Mariano's pool.

"Gomez maybe unknown to billiards enthusiasts," Mariano said. "He needs exposure to hone his skills and achieve his true potential."

Incidentally, Orcollo won his card in the prestigious International Pool Tour (IPT), a ticket to the main draw of $8-million IPT series of tournaments.

Gomez is a native of Zamboanga City and made big waves in Kuwait in 2004 when he ruled eight of 12 legs of the Kuwait Open Series. He also played in the Jakarta leg of the Asian 9-Ball Tour where he reached the round of 32. He won the 1st Japanese-Philippine 9-Ball Tour last week in Malate.

"I will meet the best Asian players in Korea and it is my motivation to bring the championship trophy back home," said Gomez, also the Laguna Open titlist.

New faces

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

ALMOST FORGOTTEN WERE THE VICtories recently of Marvin Dumandan and Bambee dela Paz.

Marvin it was who won the men's title and Bambee the women's crown in the DHL-WWWExpress National Amateur Golf championship on March 31 at the ever charming but eternally challenging Canlubang North in Laguna.

The tournament itself—now on its 11th straight year—had been warmly commended by Luigi Yulo, the amiable Canlubang executive who was profuse in his praise of Rod Feliciano during the awards ceremonies. Rod, of course, is the honorary chair of DHL and top honcho of WWWExpress.

"How time flies, really," said Luigi, who helped pilot Canlubang to a rare sweep of the recent PAL Interclub Championships' seniors and men's titles—a first for the Sugar Barons. "I cannot thank Mr. Rod Feliciano enough for consistently choosing our venue in staging his tournament. We are really deeply honored by his benevolence."

Marvin and Bambee made it doubly special this year as their triumphs were impeccable statements in contrasting styles.

Long chided as a choker, Marvin finally nailed a big one.

The 26-year-old from Davao has been a consistent national player, including a gold medal team effort in the recent SEA Games. However, he kept bungling winning a major, such as the U-Bix and Konica Minolta Pro-Ams of Bert Bravo at Riviera where he had finished twice as runner-up after fumbles in the homestretch.

"How sweet it is to win," said Marvin in Filipino after his victory, fashioned with a brilliant third-round 66 on seven birdies at the water-laced Canlubang North.

In capturing the first of the nation's three amateur majors—the others being the Philippine Amateurs and the RP Open low amateur honors—Marvin beat 2004 champion Jun Bemis and Singapore's No. 2, Quincy Quek, in the final round made dramatic by driving rains in the final holes.

Informed of Marvin's win, Commodore Danny Pizarro, the Riviera president and first vice president of the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines, said: "It's about time he won."

Comm Pizarro got Marvin into Riviera some years back, nurturing his budding career with big help from several Riviera staff who regularly chip-in a chunk of their salaries into a "*tambiolo*" to fund Marvin's training at Riviera, that beautifully maintained twin-course in Silang, Cavite.

For her part, Bambee scored her equally drama-laden victory by matching par-72 in Round 2, which proved to be the tournament's best score.

"I dedicate this victory to my parents, brothers and coaches," said Bambee, a 15-year-old incoming senior high at Miriam, who humbled her fellow members in the training pool that included veterans Lora Roberto and Anya Tanpinco, not to mention the reigning Philippine Ladies Open champion Debbie de Villa. Anya, a member of the silver team medal winner in the recent SEA Games, beat Debbie in the playoff for second spot on the second hole—a par on 18.

While Marvin is definitely of the present, Bambee is much of the future. Such new faces make for a refreshing change in our golf landscape.

Here's to you, Marvin and Bambee!

* * *

MASTERS AT ESPN/STAR SPORTS. The 70th US Masters, with Tiger Woods gunning for his fifth green jacket, will be aired live and exclusive on ESPN/STAR Sports starting tomorrow, April 7. Woods sank a 15-foot putt to defeat Chris DiMarco on the first playoff hole last year, tying Arnold Palmer with the second most Masters titles at four. Jack Nicklaus holds the record for the most Masters wins with six. Airing starts at dawn (3 a.m.) from April 7 to April 10.

* * *

FASTBREAK. Alex Marcial, remember him? He was once one of the country's top tennis players. Angel Doble, a dear buddy of mine from our CEGP days, said Alex, who's been living in America for years, is in town for a vacation. Hope to see you soon, buddy?

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

Iligan subdues Tagaytay in NBC tourney

TAGAYTAY CITY—THE ILIGAN CRUsaders bank on steady free throw shooting to thwart Batang Tagaytay, 87-85, in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the International Convention Center here.

Ferdie Go and Derrick Hubalde, who combined for 33 points, carried the cudgels for the Firefly Lightings-backed Crusaders of Mayor Lawrence Cruz and team manager Freddie Siao. Iligan improved its southern division record to 2-1.

With the hosts ahead at 69-67, 7:19 into the final canto, Go drilled four straight points followed by Hubalde's three-pointer and conversions from the line to put the Crusaders ahead at 81-78, time down to 1:16.

The Tagaytay cagers of NBC executive vice president and Mayor Bambol Tolentino tied the count at 85 in the final 30 seconds, but Hubalde's charities off Arden Guiyab spelled the difference as Paolo Malonzo's attempt bounced off the rim as time expired.

Bacchus/Harbour Centre Manila finally barged into the win column by turning back Gov. Manny Pinol's North Cotabato Braves, 104-92, in the other game.

Nani Epondulan was hit usual deadly self, scoring 23 points for coach Lawrence Chongson's Manilans who improved to 1-2 in the tourney supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

The scores:

Manila 104—Epondulan 23, Jay Cuevas 19, Coyukang 14, Raroma 11, Membrere 9, Sta. Cruz 8, Jun Cuevas 6, Hardin 6, Pribdhas 3, Pile 2, Padilla 1, Retaga 0, Masabang 0

N. Cotabato 92—Allado 25, Ligue 16, Entrata 12, Clar 8, Tamayo 7, Martinez 5, Cabanog 4, Culdora 3, Del Monte 2, Dagatan 2, Regalado 2, Jawod 0

Quarters: 25-28, 57-52, 80-79, 104-92

Iligan 87—Go 17, Hubalde 16, Kalaw 13, Nicdao 11, Ayodelle 11, Omiping 10, Bagulo 3, Gandarisa 2, Matias 2, Tajonera 0, Sagad 0

Tagaytay 85—Marquez 16, Genido 14, Reyes 13, Finullar 12, Malonzo 7, Guiyab 6, Mallari 5, De Guia 4, Santos 3, Pellejera 2, Jorge 2, Diaz 0

Quarters: 22-10, 43-25, 60-63, 87-85

Slipping Harbour Centre, Magnolia part ways today

GAMES TODAY *(FEU Gym)*
2 p.m.—Granny Goose vs Hapee-PCU
4 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Magnolia

PLAYING BELOW EXPECTATIONS, MAGNOLIA Ice Cream and Harbour Centre will try to recover from their poor starts when they clash in the PBL Unity Cup today at the FEU Gym.

While Magnolia vies for the fourth spot, Harbour Centre will try to arrest its three-game slide at 4 p.m.

Granny Goose and Hapee-PCU will also shoot for a comeback at 2 p.m. after their weekend losses.

Magnolia, Granny Goose and Hapee-PCU tote similar 1-2 cards, while Harbour Centre remains as the only winless squad at 0-3.

Magnolia, last conference's champion, has been struggling on the floor with a poor 29 percent shooting norm in its first three games. Even the scoring averages of the Spinners' top gunners have dipped considerably.

League star Arwind Santos normed 10 points on a mere 23.7 percent field-goal shooting while Jeff Chan, named as the Pivotal Player in the last finals series, delivered only 4.7 markers per game on a 15.1 percent shooting average.

Yet Portmasters coach Jorge Gallent maintains that the Spinners will always remain a threat.

"It's always a challenge to face Magnolia, so we have to prepare very hard," said Gallent. "We have to contain their big men like Arwind and Kelly (Williams) to win."

Although Harbour Centre remains in the cellar, two of its mainstays finally broke out of their scoring slump.

Jasmine W. Payo

WUSHU PRACTITIONER: A student practices wushu, a traditional martial art, at the Shi Cha Hai boarding sports school in Beijing April 5. The school is famous for training students for competitive sports from national tournaments to the Olympic games. REUTERS

SPORTSWATCH

Sulawesi hosts Friendship Games

THE 5th BIMP-EAGA (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines-East Asean Growth Area) Friendship Games will be held Nov. 24-26 at the Makassar City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) commissioner and BIMP-EAGA Council chair Leon Montemayor said this year's edition will gather the largest participation with Brunei Darussalam; the States of Sabah, State of Sarawak and Federal Territory of Labuan of Malaysia; Mindanao and Palawan of the Philippines; North Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, Middle Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, West Sulawesi, Gorontalo, East Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, Papua and West Papua in tow.

Wide-open battle seen in CSI 4th leg

EXPECT another mad scramble for top honors when the fourth stage of the Philamlife Cycling Search Invitational (CSI) Criterium Race is flagged off this Saturday at the parade grounds of Clark Field in Pampanga. Agnes Bikeshop's Alberto Primero ruled the kickoff leg in Tarlac, Oscar Rindole of Team Sports Radio won in Marikina while armyman Victor Espiritu topped the third leg in Angeles City. Registration is ongoing, according to the organizing Treo Sales and Marketing Corp. For details, contact 241-0415 or 241-0418.

University of Cebu bets show way

CEBU CITY—James Rizon bundled out Raymark Go, 21-11, 21-6, to lead the march of the University of Cebu bets into the quarterfinal round of the junior division of the JVC Regional Badminton Championships at the Holiday Spa and Badminton Courts here Tuesday. Rizon, seeking a second straight crown in the 16-under class, faces Anthony Berganting in the last 8 after the latter fashioned out a 21-13, 21-7 win over Kevin Genobia under the new scoring system. The other UC mainstays who advanced in the event staking berths to the JVC National Open Championships in June were Jeffrey Lepaopao and John Rensing, who defeated Joel Mendez, 21-14, 21-15, and Jay-R Batolan, 21-11, 21-11, respectively.

NCA 7-cock derby finals today

EXCITING matches are expected tonight when the National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-cock derby championship round blasts off at Roligon Mega Cockpit. Riding high on a derby championship last week, Rep. Iggy Arroyo and Jesry Palmares (Red Creek II) extended their winning streak in last Tuesday's eliminations by posting three more wins, and could make it a back-to-back conquest tonight. Also with three victories are Jaen VGB Firefly of Vice Gov. Boyet Joson and Pichay Spartans of Rep. Butch Pichay and Rey Briones. Within striking distance are two pointers Red Creek I, Wild Wing Sundance, Magic Wing Sundance, Mulawin AA, Jade Resort, Lucky Rin Firefly, Firefly 100 RM, BR 10 and Winpill. Meanwhile, the Allida Farms 4-cock derby, slated on April 8 at Roligon, will start at 4 p.m. For details, call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 (Jona).

Las Piñas cockfest gets support

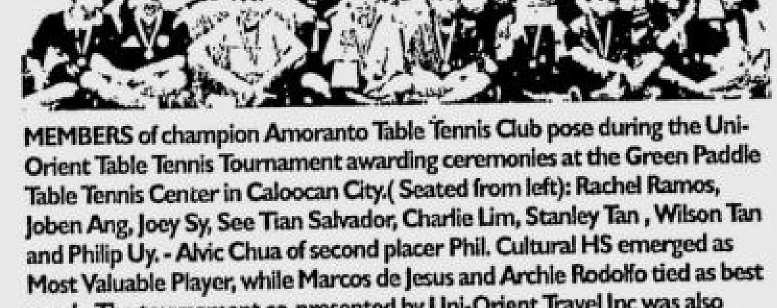
THE BATTLE among Metro Manila's elite cockers shifts to Las Piñas Coliseum when the Bigtime Bakbakan 5-cock derby unfolds on April 8 with at least 90 fights confirmed. Host Gerry Ramos will count on the support of Louie Cua, Boy de Roca, *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio, Benjie Lim, Lito Orillaza, William Co, Rep. Butch Pichay, R. Pineda, Pol Estrellado, Rep. Gerry "Boy" Espina, Sonny Lagon, Biboy Enriquez and Raymond Velayo. Joining the fray is a solid team from Las Piñas and Cavite led by former Mayor Nene Aguilar, who recently won two derbies in Pasay and Galleria de Tanza, the father-and-son team of Ashley and Gengen Arayata, former Sen. Ramon Revilla, Wewe Burgos, Mandy Garcia and Roger del Rosario. Submission of weights (1.9 kg to 2.4 kg) is set tomorrow from 2-9 p.m. For details, call 873-1040 and 874-3910.

Second day of Heritage Cup today

TOUGHER action is anticipated today when the Philippine Heritage Cup 5-bullstag derby series continues at the Araneta Coliseum with Gran Matador and B-Meg Derby Ace as sponsors. Sixty-four new entries are entered with the first of more than 100 fights starting 1 p.m. The first day of competition last Tuesday was dominated by co-champions Nelson Uy (NU Supernatural) and the team of Butch Yabut, Ding Cajulis and Ruel Medina (Goldquest Champions Maribird). For inquiries, call 911-3101 and 911-2928.

Antique Coliseum sets special 4-cocker

THE ANTIQUE Coliseum in Hamtic, Antique, will be holding a special 4-cock derby on April 11 with the assistance of Thunderbird Power Feeds. Thunderbird Platinum sponsors the event to be hosted by Capt. Jose Nietes. Also slated is the April 12 7-Bullstag Derby set at the Vargas Sports Coliseum in Carig, Tuguegarao. Hosted by Mayor Ambong Antonio & Director Boy Lacamba, the competition is sponsored by Thunderbird Bexan-XP.



MEMBERS of champion Amoranto Table Tennis Club pose during the Uni-Orient Table Tennis Tournament awarding ceremonies at the Green Paddle Table Tennis Center in Caloocan City.(Seated from left): Rachel Ramos, Joben Ang, Joey Sy, See Tian Salvador, Charlie Lim, Stanley Tan , Wilson Tan and Philip Uy. - Alvic Chua of second placer Phil. Cultural HS emerged as Most Valuable Player, while Marcos de Jesus and Archie Rodolfo tied as best coach. The tournament co-presented by Uni-Orient Travel Inc was also sponsored by Uniwoodply,Watertec, Joola, Golden Peacock, 3G, Safari, Trench, Golden Star, Triple Charles, Manxon Newise, Henry Basa, William Aw, Charles Chua and Yuk Sia.

Tokyo training slated for Larios vs Pacqiuao

JUST LIKE FILIPINO ICON MANNY Pacquiao, Mexican Oscar Larios will be trying out a new training camp for their July 2 showdown at the Araneta Coliseum.

Box-latino, in a report yesterday, revealed that Larios' camp is now communicating with Japan's most influential promoter, Akihiko Honda, for the Mexican hitman to work out at the impresario's Teiken Gym in Tokyo, where there are more southpaw sparring partners available.

Larios' trainer Edison Reinoso mentioned that this fight will be Larios' biggest in his career, so they are making a special preparation before they face Pacquiao, who'll pitch camp in Baguio City.

"On Monday in Guadalajara we will begin our physical preparation and weight-training, because the fight will be in super-featherweight and Larios must gain weight with muscles," Reinoso was quoted by Box-latino.

Reinoso added that Larios will train for a month in the capital state of Jalisco and leave for Japan on June 2, a month before the encounter with Pacquiao.

"We have chosen Teiken Gym, property of Mr. Honda, because it has sparmates who are shorter and left-handed and that will be helpful so that Larios can adapt to Pacquiao's style," the trainer said.

Earlier, Larios' camp had demanded that Team Pacquiao pay a certain amount as penalty in the event the fight gets postponed or shelved.

Larios' handlers said they have already received the advanced payment of Larios' purse.

The World Boxing Council, through its president Jose Sulaiman Chagnon, has approved the July 2 showdown as requested by Rafael Mendoza, who represents Larios.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor

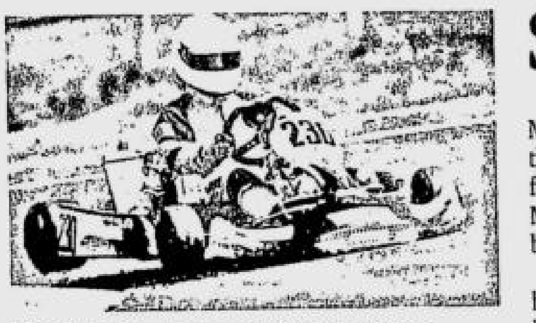
Bautista battles Bonilla May 20 at Staples gym

UNEDEFEATED YOUNG PHEnomenon Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista will take on Nicaraguan Roberto Bonilla in a 10-round showdown on May 20 underneath the Marco Antonio Barrera-Rocky Juarez bout at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Earlier, Mexican Hugo Dianzo was reported by Notimex to be the opponent for Bautista, but organizers apparently did not want to preempt a possible Philippine-Mexico war slated in November this year.

Marylyn Aceves, the publicist for Golden Boy Promotions, said that the 19-year-old Bautista, who recently signed up with GBP, will now take on the 31-year-old Ciudad Sandino native.

The news was also confirmed by Cebu promoter Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani. *Salven Lagumbay*



MARLON Stockinger in Salbris, France

Stockinger enters Euro Final

MARLON STOCKINGER MADE IT THROUGH three grueling qualifying heats to qualify-on his first try-for the final of the first round of the Rotax Max Euro Karting Challenge on March 26 in Salbris, France.

During the final race, Stockinger's engine bogged down at the start, which dropped him to last place. Despite the problem, the 14-year-old Stockinger made his way up to land 16th out of 64 drivers and finish ahead of world champions Wesleigh Orr and Kenneth Hildebrandt and one place behind his DR Racing teammate Kevin Ludi of Switzerland.

"Rarely anybody manages to do this the first time around," said Stockinger. "This is the toughest racing I've ever experienced."

3rd Batang PBA lures 14 squads

THE THIRD SEASON OF THE BATANG PBA league will highlight the Sporty Summer '06" program for the youth to be staged by Burlington, the Philippine Basketball Association, the PBA Properties and top badminton coaches.

A total of 14 squads, including a Burlington-All Stars team representing cities will fight for the championship of the event confined to boys 12 years and under.

All games will be held at the Araneta Coliseum before the actual PBA twin bill starting May. Tryouts are being held simultaneously at participating local government units.

Norman Black will be the tournament commissioner with Eric Reyes as his deputy.

The event's staging was announced by Ruddy Tan, general manager of Burlington Industries Philippines (BIP) Inc. For inquiries, call Ryan Reantillo or Nancy Cuyugan at 892-7113.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Trl)—Million Dollar (5), Manila Magic (1), War Bird (3)

Race 2—(Qrt/Trl)—C'est Moi (1), Expediter (6), Power Dance (3), Red Hot Water (2)

Race 3—(Qrt/Trl)—Big Spender (2), Monalisa (1), Ops (3), Cognac Monnet (7)

Race 4—(Qrt/Trl)—Ole!Ole!Ole! (3), Modern Classic (1), Ravishing Raffy, Cool Turner (2)

Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Trl)—Habagat (2), Born Perfect (1), Danille's Angel (10), Patutuina (4), Through The fire (9)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Trl)—Mr. Lucas (9), Yao Man (7), Western Legend (5), Split Decision (8), Dixie Dash (2)

Race 7—(Qrt/Trl)—Angel Eyes (5), God Is Good (4), Rose and Toy (6), Hot Number (1)

Race 8—(Qrt/Trl)—Chariot of Fire (8), Moab/Hear Me (3), Staunch Ally 92), Bellin Bellin (4)

Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Trl)—Apex (11), Dona Gelay (9), Tell Henry (6), Virgin Island (12), War Hero (7), Tini Bambini (6)

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Lucky 13 gives NJ Nets Atlantic title

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW Jersey—The New Jersey Nets won their 13th straight game Tuesday, holding off Atlanta for a 96-94 victory on a night when they also clinched their fourth Atlantic Division title in the last five years .

Vince Carter scored 27 points for the Nets, who tied Dallas for the longest winning streak in the NBA this season and moved to within one of the franchise record set in 2003-2004. The division title was actually sealed with second-place Philadelphia's 124-91 loss to Cleveland earlier Tuesday.

Atlanta (22-51), which cut a 23-point fourth-quarter deficit to one point, lost for the 12th time in 14 games. Joe Johnson scored 33 points to lead the Hawks.

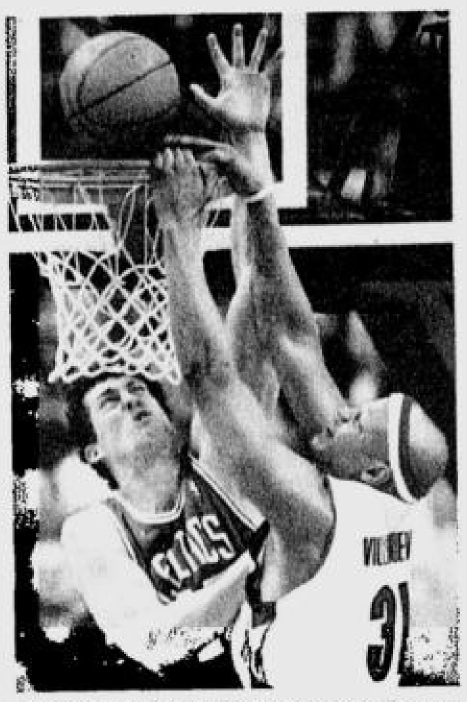
In Miami, Shaquille O'Neal had 24 points and 10 rebounds to lead a balanced Heat effort in a 115-89 rout of Milwaukee.

The Heat never trailed and had six players in double figures, including all five starters.

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 37 points to lead the Cavaliers past Philadelphia, 124-91, for its ninth straight win as the playoff-bound Cavs got one player back from injury and lost another.

Center Zydrunas Ilgauskas sprained his left ankle in the first quarter and did not return. Cleveland guard Larry Hughes played for the first time since Dec. 31.

In Toronto, Paul Pierce and Wally Szczerbiak scored 22 points apiece to help Boston edge the Raptors, 124-120.


BOSTON'S Raef LaFrentz (left) challenges a shot by Toronto's Charlie Villanueva. AP

In Washington, a game against the worst team in the East was an ideal homecoming for the Wizards, which got 13 points and a season-high 13 assists from Gilbert Arenas in a 105-90 drubbing of the New York Knicks.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Antonio McDyess had a season-high 26 points and added 14 rebounds to help Detroit beat New Orleans, 101-93, for its 60th win.

The Pistons have won five straight, and need four wins in their final eight games to break the 1988-89 team's franchise record of 63 wins.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Primoz Brezec muscled in a layup over several defenders with 54 seconds to play, then added a pair of free throws to help the Bobcats to a 97-92 nipping of Minnesota.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Chucky Atkins scored 22 points and Pau Gasol finished with 16 points, seven rebounds and six assists to help the Grizzlies crush Golden State, 100-75.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 29 points, Josh Howard had 23 and Josh Powell dazzled during a game-breaking stretch of the second quarter, helping the Mavericks shatter Sacramento's nearly month-long run of strong defense with a 127-101 triumph.

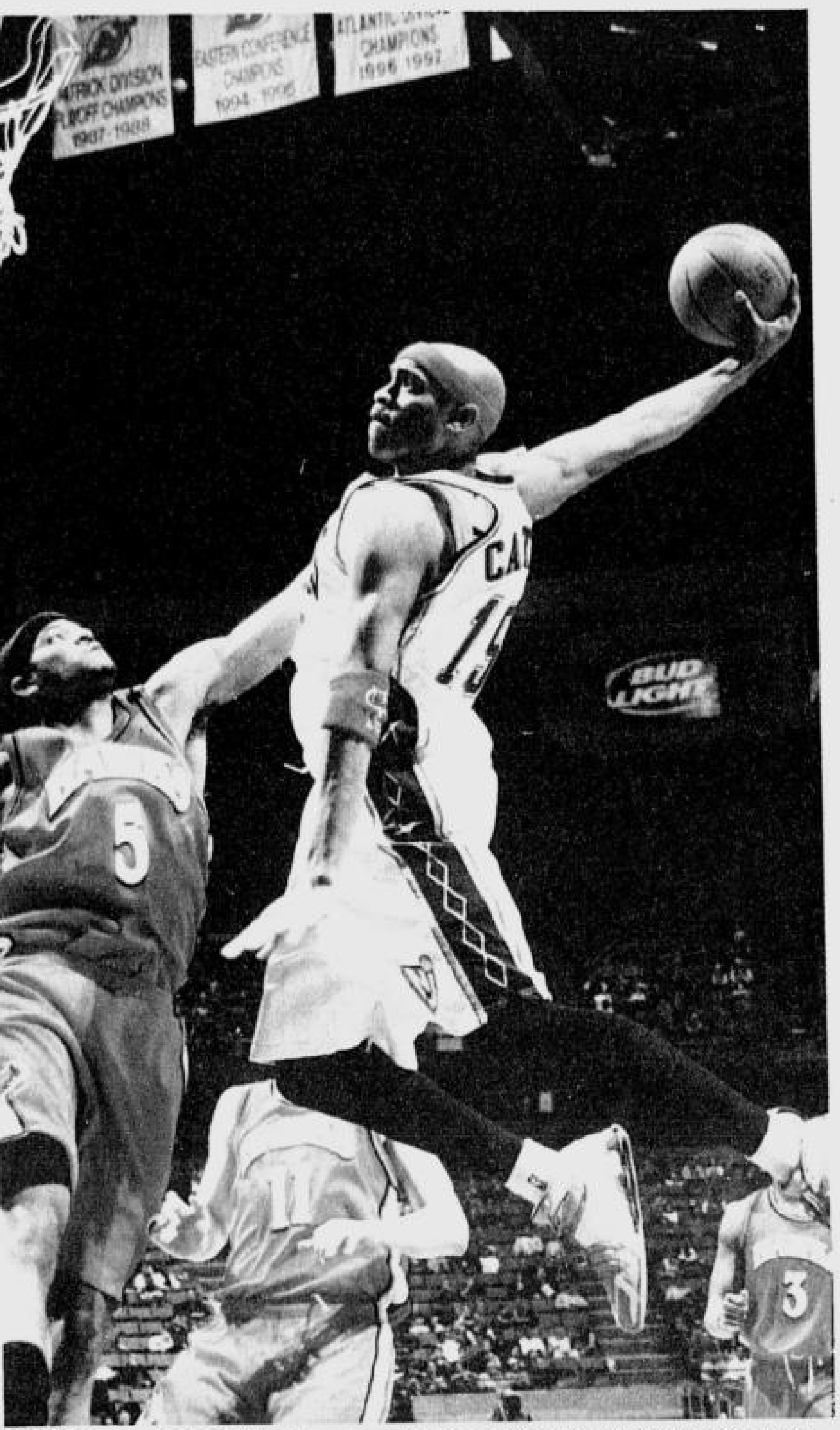
In Chicago, Ben Gordon scored 16 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter, and the surging Bulls moved closer to a playoff spot, rallying from a 17-point deficit to trip struggling Indiana, 102-96.

In Salt Lake City, Manu Ginobili scored 26 points and the San Antonio Spurs held off Utah, 95-86, to maintain their 2 1/2-game lead for the top seed in the West.

In Seattle, Ray Allen scored 32 points and moved into a tie for second place on the NBA's career 3-pointers list as the SuperSonics ripped Houston, 104-87.

Allen moved even with Dale Ellis, who played six-plus seasons for Seattle, for second all-time each with 1,719 3-pointers. Allen shot 11-for-22 and made three 3-pointers, all in the second half.

In Los Angeles, Sam Cassell scored 10 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter and the Clippers overcame a 22-point deficit and 81.6 percent shooting by Denver in the first half to nip the Nuggets, 111-109.AP


VINCE Carter (right) of the New Jersey Nets soars for a tomahawk slam against Josh Smith of the Atlanta Hawks at the Continental Airlines Arena. AFP

Yao leads Sportsmanship hopefuls

YAO: Good sport AP

NEW YORK—CHINA'S YAO MING HAS BEEN named to the list of candidates for the National Basketball Association's Sportmanship Award.

The three-time all-star is among a group that also includes Shaquille O'Neal of the Miami Heat, Elton Brand of the Los Angeles Lakers, Luol Deng of the Chicago Bulls, Jacque Vaughn of the New Jersey Nets and Andrei Kirilenko of the Utah Jazz.

The annual award is given to the NBA players that best exemplifies sportsmanship on the court. The winner will be announced at the end of the season.

Yao is currently enjoying his best campaign in the NBA, averaging 22.7 points and 10.3 rebounds through the first 52 games of the 2005-06 regular season.

The giant center was also named on Monday the Western Conference player of the week. It is the second time Yao has won the award this season and the third of his career since he turned pro in 2002.

NBA on SOLAR SPORTS:10 a.m.—Houston vs. Portland

Wright has nothing bad to say about opponent

NEW YORK—WINKY WRIGHT IS THAT RARE boxer—no boasts, no snide remarks about his opponent.

"I have nothing bad to say about this man Taylor," he said on Tuesday at a news conference leading to his June 17 bout with Jermain Taylor in Memphis, Tennessee. "No matter what we say before the fight, we have to do it in the ring."

Taylor (25-0) won a decision over champion Bernard Hopkins in July for the middleweight crown, then won a second decision against Hopkins in December.

"I love the fact that Winky respects me as a champion and I respect him as a challenger," Taylor said. "His defense is excellent and he comes to fight. We are two men who love the sport of boxing. We do our talking inside the ring."

Wright (50-3) has a left-handed stance that many boxers find troubling. He has beaten such top fighters as Shane Mosely and Felix Trinidad.

"Jermain went to school against Bernard Hopkins and graduated," promoter Lou DiBella said. "Now he will get his Ph.D. against Winky." *AP*

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MS. LIVIA ALICIA R. RAMOS
Vice President, Investment Office
Level 3, Core D, GSIS Building
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

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The GSIS reserves the right to reject any or all offers and to annul the process, to waive any required formality therein, or to accept such offers as may be advantageous to the GSIS without giving any reason therefor and without incurring any liability to the affected offeror/s. Further, the offeror shall be liable for any and all costs incurred in its participation and the GSIS assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the offeror/s or any of its agents, for expenses or losses that may be incurred in participating in this undertaking.

For more information, contact Ms. Ramos at telephone numbers 834-2649 and 891-6161 local 4581.

(Original Signed)
OMELITA J. TIANGCO
Executive Vice President
Finance Sector

Gators remain NC favorites

INDIANAPOLIS—WITH FOUR SOPHOMORES and a junior in the starting lineup, few people expected Florida to emerge as the national champions.

But after Florida dominated UCLA, 73-57, on Monday for the national crown, many people believe the Gators are the odds-on favorite for next year's title.

With the lure of fame and big-money from the NBA, just how many players who will skip their remaining years of college eligibility for the pro game remains to be seen.

Florida's underclassmen have until April 29 to declare their intentions to enter the NBA draft on June 28.

Players can rescind their earlier intention by June 18 and return to Gainesville if they have not retained an agent.

Gators coach Billy Donovan knows the perilous nature of the NCAA tournament and remains unconvinced his team is the nation's best.

"We're sitting up here today as the national champions," he said. "But I still don't necessarily believe that we may be the best team in the country because when you're playing an event that's a one-shot deal, anything can happen."

Donovan knows both sides of the Final Four, having coached the Gators during their 89-76 loss to Michigan State in the 2000 championship game.

"I've been on the side of it where it's ended heart-breaking and now I've been on the side of it where it's obviously an incredible feeling."

The Gators have several players with pro potential, most notably Joakim Noah, the 6-foot-11 sophomore forward who was named the Final Four's most outstanding player.

Graceful yet aggressive for a big man, Noah was outstanding against UCLA, scoring 16 points, grabbing nine rebounds and recording six blocks. *Reuters*

For Woods, it's really a different Masters

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—THE FIRST TEE SHOT of a crisp Tuesday morning sailed against a sunlit sky and disappeared into a bunker.

Tiger Woods' next effort wasn't much better.

He hit a pull-hook that took one hop before smacking into the trunk of a pine tree and landing in the second cut of rough. It was more of the same on the second hole, one drive clattering into the trees on the left, another drive sailing into the woods on the right.

Augusta National is tougher than ever, and it has Woods' attention.

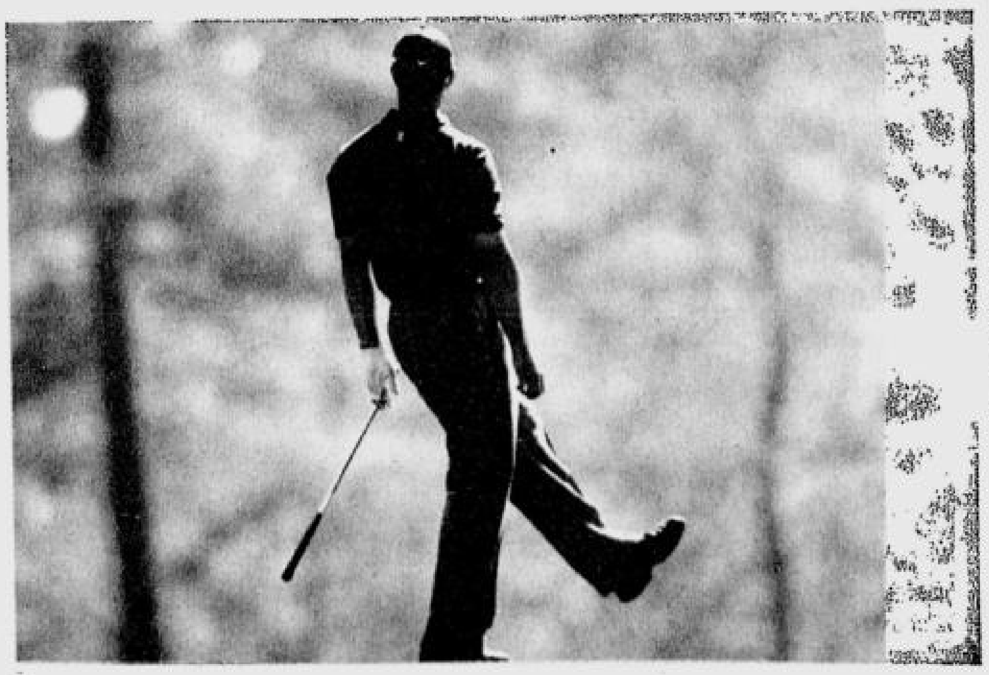
For all the changes this year at the Masters, perhaps the biggest facing Woods is that his father is not here for the first time.

Earl Woods is too weak to travel. The cancer that returned in 2004 and spread throughout his body has taken such a toll that Woods flew across the country to California the day before The Players Championship to check on his father. Woods returned to Sawgrass and tied for 22nd, although that was more a result of poor iron play and substandard putting.

One trait he inherited from his father is a strong mind.

"I've been dealing with it for years, so nothing has changed," Woods said of his father's health. "It is what it is, and you just deal with it. Everyone who has had a family member who lived that long, you're going to deal with it sometime. Unfortunately, it's our time now. But as far as being a distraction, no. I had plenty of time to focus on each and every shot. I just hit poor shots and putted terrible."

Even so, the Masters has always been a family affair.


TIGER Woods hopes to put his off-course woes behind him. AP

Earl Woods had heart bypass surgery during the '96 Tour Championship and nearly died before doctors revived him. There were complications from surgery, and he wasn't supposed to travel that next April to Augusta for his son's professional debut in a major.

But the father was at the Masters in 1997, and even gave Woods a putting lesson.

"I putted great," Woods said with a smile.

Woods didn't have a three-putt that week, shattered scoring records to win by 12 shots in a watershed moment in golf, then walked off the 18th green and into the arms of his father, melting in tears.

No one will really know how heavy this weighs on Woods as he plays the first major of the year.

"When you're away from the course, obviously things are a little bit different," Woods said. *AP*

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Cavite & Maxi in NY

FILMMAKER Ian Gamazon in "Cavite"

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

"SUCCESSFUL" WAS HOW A New York-based Filipino scriptwriter described the recent screenings of "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros" and "Cavite" at the Lincoln Center and Museum of Modern Art (Moma) in the Big Apple, with Oscar-caliber artists Michael Moore and Sylvia Miles in attendance.

"The two films were received extremely well," Vincent Nebrida told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview. "The tickets were sold out, the audience was mixed—not only Filipino-Americans, but also New Yorkers, who happen to be some of the most discriminating moviegoers in the world."

"Maximo" and "Cavite" were screened as part of the 35th New Directors/New Films program held at the two venues from March 22 to April 2.

"This program/festival is one of the most prestigious in the world," Nebrida noted. "It's very difficult to get accepted. Only films by two other Filipinos, Lino Brocka and Mike de Leon, have been included in previous editions."

ROBERT PEREZ DE TAGLE

MICHAEL Moore and Vincent Nebrida after the post-screening forum.

Nebrida is vice president for Acquisitions and Distribution of Unico Entertainment, which acquired "Maximo" and "Cavite" for worldwide distribution (except Europe for "Maximo" and US for "Cavite"). He said foreigners were impressed by the fact that the two films had been made for less than $25,000, and showed a fresh approach and new sensitivity.

Moore, an Oscar winner ("Bowling for Columbine," 2004), and Miles, Oscar Best Supporting Actress nominee (for "Midnight Cowboy," 1969), met with the filmmakers.

Thrilled

"Sylvia loved 'Maximo,' " Nebrida said, "and attended the after-party hosted by the Philippine Consulate following the screening of 'Maximo.' She met (ufo Pictures producer) Raymond Lee and (director) Auraeus Solito. Michael enjoyed 'Cavite' and even attended the forum that followed. He also posed for snapshots with [filmmakers] Ian Gamazon and Neill de la Llana."

Needless to say, Nebrida said, the two—who won the "Someone to Watch" trophy at this year's Independent Spirit Awards—had been thrilled to meet Moore, "an icon in world politics" and the maker of "Fahrenheit 9/11," the highest grossing documentary in the United States.

The New York screenings are significant, said Nebrida, because this means "Philippine cinema is once again being noticed by the world's top programmers."

The New Directors/New Films website asserted that the 36 new filmmakers featured in the NY festival "will help shape the cinema of tomorrow."

Nebrida said it was also noteworthy that the festival's six programmers had unanimously chosen "Maximo" as opening film, along with Ryan Fleck's "Half Nelson," starring Ryan Gosling (of "The Notebook"). The programmers were: Marian Masone, Joanna Ney and Richard Peña of the Lincoln Center's Film Society; and Mary Lea Bandy, Jytte Jensen and Laurence Kardish of the Moma's Department of Film and Media.

The Philippine presence in the festival "recognizes a new wave of Pinoy filmmakers," Nebrida concluded. "When a Filipino movie is honored abroad; it helps everyone cross over. It becomes easier for other Filipino movies to get in festivals. It becomes easier to sell our movies to other countries."

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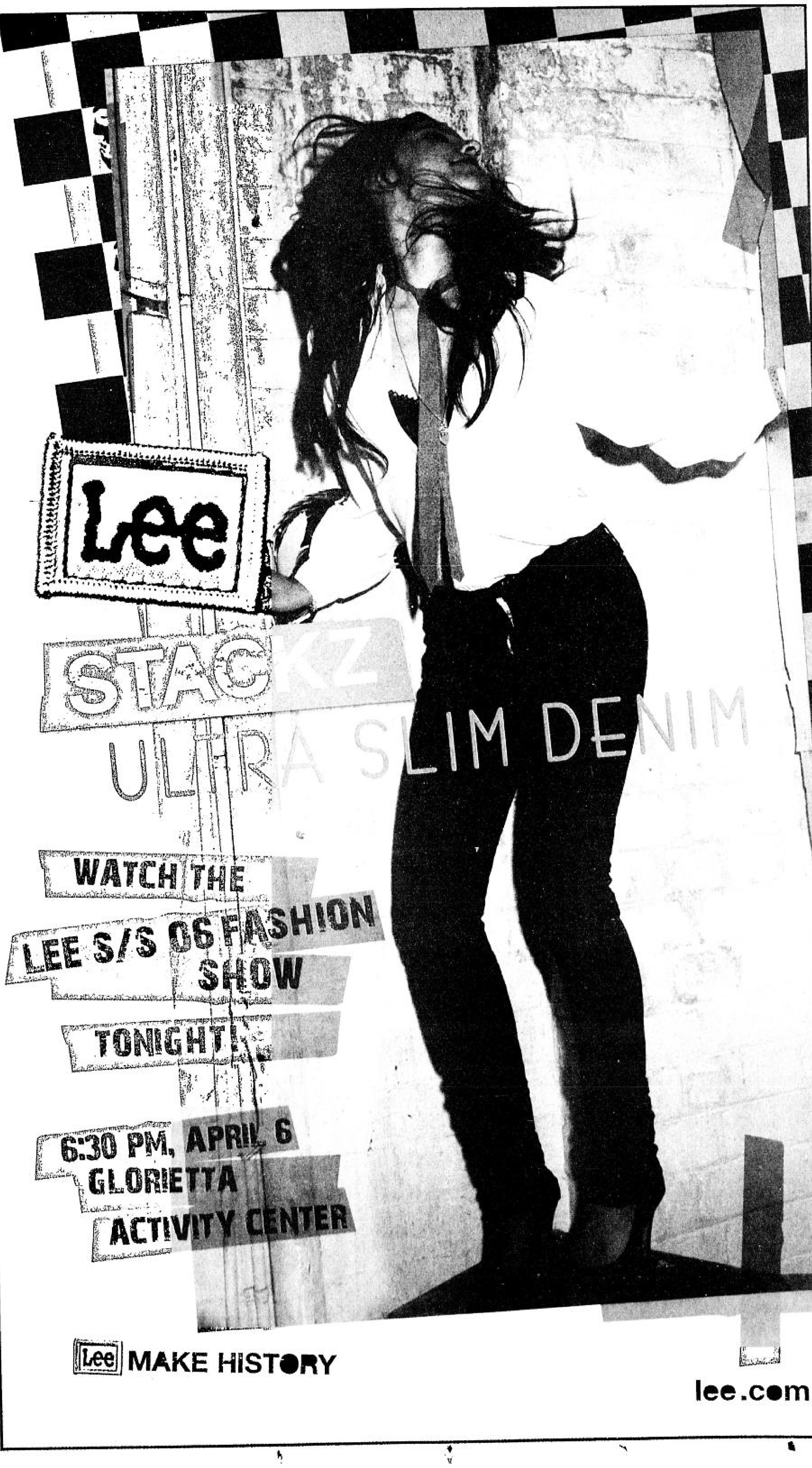

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9 (DOLBY EX) V FOR VENDETTA
10 (DOLBY EX) CHINESE TALL STORY

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2 (DOLBY) ICE AGE 2
3 (DOLBY) BANDIDAS
4 (DOLBY) BASIC INSTINCT 2

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor.
Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
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2 BASIC INSTINCT-2
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 THE HILL HAVE EYES

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Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
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2 (DOLBY) MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) ICE AGE-2
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

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Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
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3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
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5 GRANDMA'S BOY

starmall EDSA SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) CLOSE FOR RENOVATION
5 BASIC INSTINCT-2

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1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 NAG AAPOY NA DAGAT
3 AEON FLUX
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metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 BASIC INSTINCT-2
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 VENOM
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
3 CHINESE TALL STORY

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 ICE AGE-2
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) ICE AGE-2
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 (DTS ES) MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan,
Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE-2

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
4 (DTS) RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel. (042) 660-5271
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2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
4 (DTS) RESERVED

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 16 BLOCKS

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 (DTS) MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) ICE AGE-2
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 (DOLBY) ULTRAVIOLET
3 (DTS) ICE AGE-2
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
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2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) V FOR VENDETTA

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4 (DTS) NORTH COUNTRY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 ICE AGE-2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 (DOLBY) VENOM

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 ICE AGE-2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 16 BLOCKS
2 ULTRAVIOLET

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 HIYAS SA PARAISO NG KASALANAN
3 NAG AAPOY NA DAGAT
4 (DTS) DEVILS IN THE DEEP

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) THE HILLS HAVE EYES
2 NAG AAPOY NA DAGAT
3 (DTS) ICE AGE-2
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 ULTRAVIOLET

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 ICE AGE-2
3 VENOM
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BASIC INSTICNT-2
2 NAG AAPOY NA DAGAT

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CINEMA 4 BANDIDAS 10:35, 12:55, 3:15, 5:35, 7:55, 10:20 R13
CINEMA 5 ICE AGE 2 11:45, 1:55, 4:00, 6:05, 8:10, 10:20 GP
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APRIL 26, 2006	FREESTYLE & POPS FERNANDEZ	8:00PM

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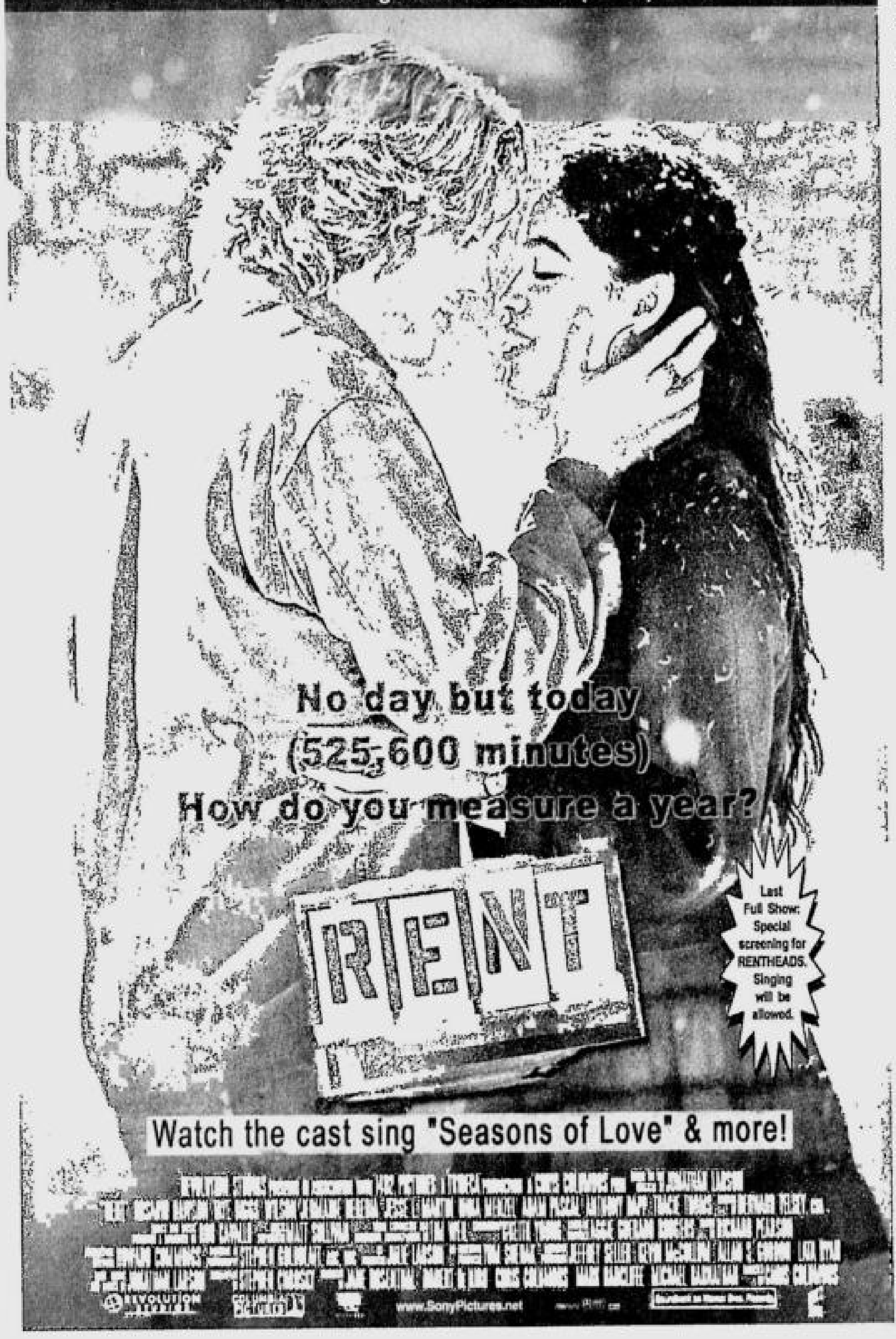

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JUST FRIENDS 6:50 / 9:00 NANNY McPHEE 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40	BANDIDAS 12:00 / 2:20 / 4:40 / 7:00 / 9:20	ICE AGE 2 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:20	ICE AGE 2 2:15 / 4:25 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 6:35 / 9:05
MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	SHE'S THE MAN 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN 7:30 / 9:50	BASIC INSTINCT 2 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249-P299

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MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:00 R3 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40	ICE AGE 2 12:15 R4 / 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35	BANDIDAS 12:05 R3 / 1:35 / 3:55 / 6:15 / 8:35
GRANDMA'S BOY 12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45	THE HILLS HAVE EYES 12:55 / 3:15 / 5:35 / 8:05	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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ROUNDUP

Baby, film, wedding

CRUISE rides a bike during the German TV show 'Wetten Dass..?' AP

BERLIN—ACTOR Tom Cruise told Germany's leading tabloid that he wanted to tie the knot this summer with fiancee Katie Holmes, after the birth of their baby and the upcoming release of his new film, "Mission Impossible III."

Cruise was in Germany to plug the film on the country's popular "Wetten Dass ..." ("I'll Bet ...") TV show. He said on the show Saturday that two pilots were at the ready to fly him home should Holmes go into labor.

"If Katie calls, I'm gone," Cruise said, insisting that he wanted to be present at the birth of their first child.

"First the baby, then the film," he was quoted as saying. "Then, in summer, we want to get married. I won't let this woman get away." The film is due for release in May. *AP*

Father Christmas

LOS ANGELES—Oscar-nominated actor Paul Giamatti has signed on to play Father Christmas in a new comedy that will costar Vince Vaughn.

The Warner Bros comedy, still untitled, reunites Vaughn with director David Dobkin, who directed him in "Wedding Crashers," costarring Owen Wilson, according to Daily Variety.

Giamatti, 38, sprang to fame with his role in 2004's wine-themed road movie "Sideways," and won an Oscar nomination this year for his supporting role in Ron Howard's boxing epic "Cinderella Man." He lost the award to George Clooney who won it for "Syriana." *AFP*

Madonna tour

NEW YORK—The Material Girl/Mom is set to go on a world tour this summer.

Madonna will open the "Confessions Tour" in Los Angeles on May 21, work eastward through North America and jump to Europe on July 30 in Cardiff, Wales, it was announced Monday.

"I'm going to turn the world into one big dance floor," the 47-year-old singer said in a statement.

It is Madonna's first tour since the 2004 "Re-Invention Tour." Other stops include Las Vegas, Phoenix, Chicago, Montreal, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Miami and Atlantic City, New Jersey.

European destinations include London, Rome and Paris. The tour will also extend to Japan, featuring concerts in Tokyo and Osaka. More dates are expected to be added. *AP*

$1-M previews

NEW YORK—Julia Roberts was almost the million-dollar baby on Broadway last week.

"Three Days of Rain," which stars Roberts, Paul Rudd and Bradley Cooper, grossed a whopping $988,298 for its first full week of preview performances, according to figures released Monday by the League of American Theatres and Producers.

The eight performances, which began March 28, played to 101 percent of capacity (which includes standing room) at the Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre, the league said. The Richard Greenberg play—Roberts' Broadway debut—opens April 19. *AP*

New character charms viewers in 'Ice Age' sequel

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

> A warm, fuzzy feeling all around

AFTER A FILM CHARMS THE socks off moviegoers, it's often parlayed into a sequel some years later. Some 70 percent of the time, however, the sequel turns out to be not as good as the original.

So, why do a sequel? Because even those diminishing returns can add up to millions of extra dollars for the emerging film franchise.

"Ice Age: The Meltdown" isn't as delightful and endearing as the first one, but it's still worth a peek.

Plotwise, things have simmered down, with the main problem involving the need for all living creatures to head for the far side of a valley to avoid being drowned in a huge flood, after the end of the Ice Age causes the glaciers to melt.

The absence of a major villain or conflict makes the proceedings feel impersonal. The stakes are high for all of the earth's creatures, but viewers can't empathize with their problem.

Relief

That's why it's a relief when the movie finally introduces the new character—Ellie, a female woolly mammoth who eventually ends up as original "Ice Age" gangmate Manny's squeeze.

The winsome lady mammoth is a breath of fresh air in the generally sassy proceedings, and the change of pace is definitely welcome. All that ack-ack sass gets to be a strain after a while, so it's nice that a softer, more "romantic" subplot has been put in motion.

What makes the new character even cuter is the fact that she isn't the least bit interested in Manny as a lovemate. Why? Well, because she doesn't *know* she's a mammoth; she believes she's a big possum—and these two species don't mix in the romance department!

It seems she suffered a traumatic separation from her mother when she was little, and a family of possums brought her up. She empathized with them completely, and even taught herself to hang by her tail from a tree branch!

There's nothing logical about that, of course, so viewers will just have to suspend disbelief *big time.* That isn't all that hard to do, because Ellie is just so (hugely) cute . . .

When push comes to shove, however, the sequel still ends up belonging to little, desperate, acorn-loving Scrat, who makes occasional appearances in the movie, just to show who's *really* the boss in this production.

So, the film ends up a "can-see." If you watch only one motion picture every two months, you might pass on this one in favor of a better film.

But if you're the movie-a-week sort and it's a humdrum moviegoing weekend, you could give it an anthropomorphic gander. "Ice Age 2" generates warm, fuzzy feelings all around.

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2	ICE AGE 2	12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:30	G
3	BANDIDAS	1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	
4	BASIC INSTINCT 2	12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00	R-18

SHANG CINEPLEX

① ICE AGE 2
MTRCB. GP
1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00 LMF

② BANDIDAS
(Subject to MTRCB Rating)
2.00, 4.25, 6.50, 9.15 LMF

③ NANNY MCPHEE
MTRCB GP 2.00, 6.40
JUST FRIENDS
MTRCB. R-13 4.20, 9.00

④ THE HILLS HAVE EYES
MTRCB R-18
12.00, 2.30, 5.00, 7:30, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE BASIC INSTINCT 2
MTRCB R-18 2.00, 4.40, 7.20, 10.00 LMF
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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES	2 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	3 CHINESE TALL STORY	4 MOMENTS OF LOVE	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES	2 GRANDMA'S BOY	3 THX BANDIDAS 12:05, 2:10, 4:15, 7:20, 8:25, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	4 BASIC INSTINCT 2	5 MOMENTS OF LOVE	6 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	7 JUST FRIENDS	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE HILLS HAVE EYES	2 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN			
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX BANDIDAS 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS			
	3 RENT 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 JUST FRIENDS 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	2 BANDIDAS			
	3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES	4 GRANDMA'S BOY	5 JUST FRIENDS		
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	3 CHINESE TALL STORY	4 BANDIDAS	5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES		

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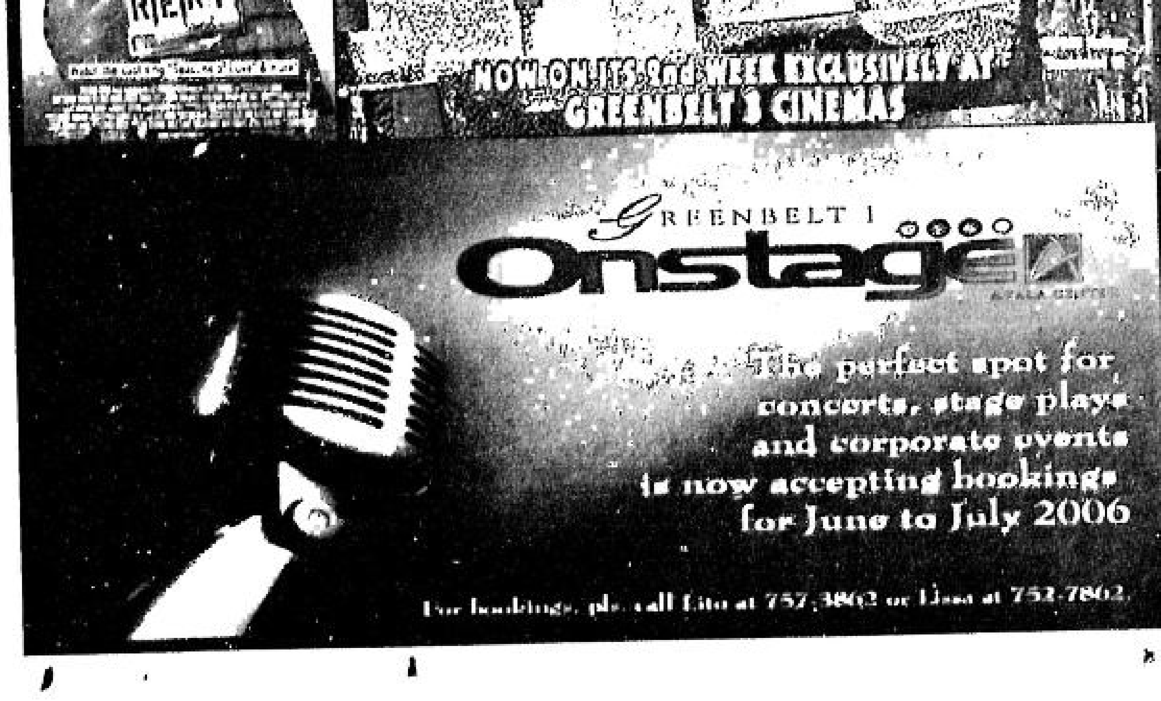

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2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
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4 RESERVE

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2 ICE AGE 2
3 GRANDMA'S BOY
4 BANDIDAS

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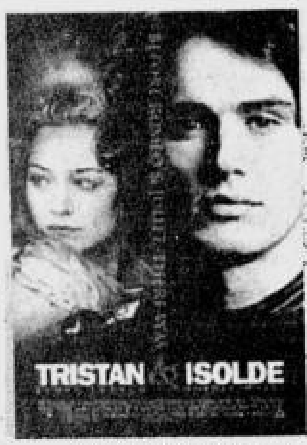

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4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2

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Share a movie with a loved one with SM Cinema's
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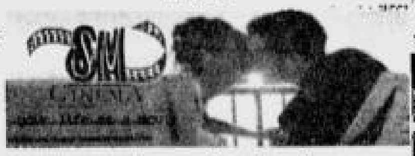
Starts on March 15 to April 30, 2006
*Mondays to Thursdays



enjoy each other's company

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MEGAMALL * STA. MESA * MANILA * PODIUM * FAIRVIEW * SOUTHMALL
NORTH EDSA * SAN LAZARO * STA. ROSA * PAMPANGA * BAGUIO * VALENZUELA
MARILAO * MOLINO** BATANGAS * LUCENA * CEBU * DAVAO* CAGAYAN DE ORO

**Promo starts on April 15, 2006

MEDIA PARTNERS: 96.3WRocK iFM 93.9

PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO 1175 SERIES OF 2006

cordially invite you to the

TRISTAN & ISOLDE

Red Carpet Premiere
TONIGHT at 7:30 p.m.
SM Megamall Cinema 1
REGULAR SHOWING STARTS APRIL 15 WITH
SNEAK PREVIEW ON APRIL 10 TO 12 AT SM CINEMAS

MTRCB Rating: R-13

TRISTAN & ISOLDE

METRO MANILA

THE PODIUM

ICE AGE 2
12:00 FS / 12:30 MF / 02:35
04:40 / 06:45 / 08:30LFS
08:50 LMF / 10:20 END
BANDIDAS
02:00 FS / 02:25 MF / 04:35
06:45 / 8:25LFS
09:00 LMF / 10:40 END

SM MEGACINEMA

1 BANDIDAS
10:40FS / 11:10 MF / 01:20
03:30 / 05:40
07:50 / 09:30LFS
010:00 LMF / 11:40 END
2 GRANDMA'S BOY
3 ICE AGE 2
4 RESERVED
5 CHINESE TALL STORY
6 JUST FRIENDS
7 SHE'S THE MAN
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3
9 VENOM
10 MOMENTS OF LOVE
11 NANNY McPHEE
12 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

1 ICE AGE 2
2 JUST FRIENDS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 RESERVED
5 BANDIDAS
6 CHINESE TALL STORY
7 ULTRAVIOLET
9 VENOM

SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 HOUSE OF FURY
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1 NANNY McPHEE
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 JUST FRIENDS
4 VENOM
5 FINAL DESTINATION 3
6 GRANDMA'S BOY
7 BANDIDAS
8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
9 ICE AGE 2
10 FEARLESS
11 V FOR VENDETTA
12 SHE'S THE MAN

SM CITY STA. MESA

1 ICE AGE 2
2 JUST FRIENDS
3 BANDIDAS
4 GRANDMA'S BOY
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 VENOM
7 NANNY McPHEE
8 ULTRAVIOLET
9 SHE'S THE MAN
10 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY BICUTAN

1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 JUST FRIENDS
4 BANDIDAS

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

1 ICE AGE 2
2 BANDIDAS
3 VENOM
4 GRANDMA'S BOY
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY MANILA

1 GRANDMA'S BOY
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 ICE AGE 2
5 NANNY McPHEE
6 BANDIDAS
7 CHINESE TALL STORY
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 V FOR VENDETTA
11 VENOM
12 JUST FRIENDS

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

1 ICE AGE 2
2 BANDIDAS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 VENOM
5 GRANDMA'S BOY
6 JUST FRIENDS
7 CHINESE TALL STORY
8 SHE'S THE MAN
9 ULTRAVIOLET

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA

1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 JUST FRIENDS

SM CITY SUCAT

1 JUST FRIENDS
2 ICE AGE 2
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 BANDIDAS

EVENT CALENDAR — SM CENTER stage — EVENT CALENDAR

MAXIMEDIA PRESENTS

Parokya ni Edgar

APRIL 7, 2006
FRIDAY • 8:30 PM
SM NORTH EDSA
CINEMA 1
Tickets at
(P180 • P280 • P380)

Nina Beyond Limits

APRIL 8, 2006
SATURDAY • 8:30 PM
SM MEGAMALL
CINEMA 3
Tickets at
(P300 • P500 • P800)

Tickets available at TICKETWORLD 891-5610/ 891-9999

LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO

1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY MARILAO

1 VENOM
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE 2
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3

SM CITY BATANGAS

1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE 2
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY BACOOR

1 NANNY McPHEE
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 ICE AGE 2
4 ULTRAVIOLET
5 BANDIDAS
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE
7 VENOM
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1 SHAGGY DOG
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 ICE AGE 2
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 NANNY McPHEE
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY LUCENA

1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 ICE AGE 2
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY MOLINO

1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 VENOM

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU

1 ULTRAVIOLET
11:20FS / 11:30 MF / 01:10
02:50 / 04:30 / 06:10
07:50 / 09:22 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:00 END
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11:20FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30
3:30 / 05:30
07:30 / 09:10 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:10 END
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
11:20FS / 11:30 MF
01:30 / 03:30 / 05:30
07:30 / 09:06 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:05 END
4 NANNY McPHEE
5 GLORY ROAD
6 V FOR VENDETTA
7 MOMENTS OF LOVE
8 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY ILOILO

1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 RESERVED
3 ICE AGE 2
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 VENOM
7 RESERVED
8 THE DARK

SM CITY DAVAO

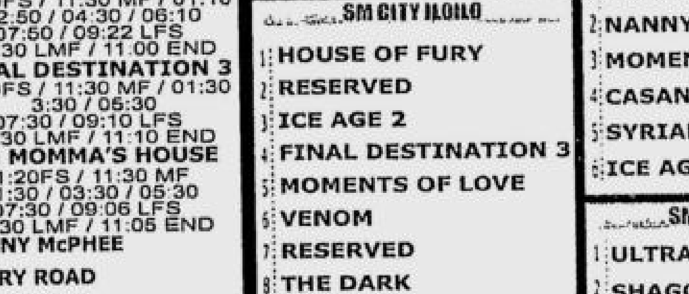
1 CASANOVA
2 NANNY McPHEE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 CASANOVA
5 SYRIANA
6 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 HOUSE OF FURY
4 ICE AGE 2

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

One, two, three, FREE!



SM CINEMA

Get 4 tickets for the price of 3!
This promo is valid only during the 3-day mallwide sale at
SM San Lazaro, Marilao, Cagayan de Oro and
SM Super Center Molino
Not applicable with other SM Cinema promos

Per DTI-NCR Permit # A1-263, Series of 2006
Per DTI-Bulacan Permit # 011, Series of 2006
Per DTI-MOR-X-035, Series of 2004
Per DTI-Cavite Permit #098, Series of 2006

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING MTRCB RATING SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

"I'M a winner, too!

John Prats given Kea

By Nini Valera

JOHN PRATS SAID he would have given the condominium unit and half of the P1-million prize money to fellow housemate Keanna Reeves had he won the top prize in the reality TV show "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition."

The reality show, aired on ABS-CBN, ended on Saturday.

Just right

Keanna won with 571,607 text votes, 44.2 percent of the total; John, second placer, 372,198 votes or 28.8 percent.

It was just right that his starlet-friend won, the young actor told INQUIRER Entertainment on Monday. "She entered the house for the sake of her two children."

Keanna received about P4 million worth of cash and prizes. Her chosen charity, the women's organization Gabriela, also received P1 million.

John said he already felt like a winner when he entered the PBB house last Feb. 5. "It was just a bonus that I landed in second place," he said. "I joined for the experience, expecting nothing. I was prepared to leave in the second week."

Surreal

John lasted all of the prescribed 58 days. He described his life inside the PBB house as surreal.

"No one but a housemate would understand

WILLIE NEPOMUCENO TAKES
the very popular reality TV show
offering, "Pinoy's Big Bother Co
Edition."

Imagine the hilarious consec
Willie Nep gathers the most fan
infamous, celebrities under one
roof—Pacman, Gringo, Mang F
Ka Freddie, Erap, FVR, Tita Cory
Aqino, just to name a few. Garci
show up if he's not evicted soon

See the housemates break do
the "confession" room: the Peop
dedicating a mission to wife Jinky
"*Para sa 'yo.... ang labadang it*
phy caught on tape cavorting wit
housemate; or Gringo plotting a
against Kuya while Erap is ordere
smart Kris in "Game Ka Pa Ba?"
dle Aguilar shave his long hair in
ing his guitar?

"Pinoy's Big Bother" will also
Willie Nep's impressions of forei
music artists.

Holy thoughts

"Kerygma TV" (Wednesdays,
11:30 p.m.) conducts a Holy We
treat" in the form of a one-hour s
"Dakilang Pag-ibig."

Hosted by Bo Sanchez, Catho
preacher and best-selling author
B. Singson, the special will be air
Maundy Thursday, 11 a.m to 12
lay preachers will share "inspirin
on God's love [and on] humility a
hood.

Remember Paul A

Paul Anka—indefatigable hitn
career started in the late 1950s—
dapper 63-year-old and still surp
ences nationwide with his energe
mances. He recently released an
"Rock Swings," in which he inter
of the greatest rock songs of the
years—among them "It's My Lif
Bon Jovi, "Jump" by Van Halen a

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

War & remembrance

A new documentary on the WW II ship USS Cooper, which sank in Ormoc Bay, yields a treasure trove of tales

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

FOR LOS ANGELES-BASED filmmaker Daniel Foster, history is not about boring relics; it's alive, brimming with color and drama.

Foster vows to bring a bygone era back to life in his latest project. He is currently writing, directing and co-editing a documentary on a sunken World War II ship, "USS Cooper: Return to Ormoc Bay," for the Cebu-based Hollywood firm Bigfoot Entertainment.

(The USS Cooper was torpedoed by the Japanese in the waters off Ormoc, Leyte, on Dec. 3, 1944.)

He is currently finishing post-production work on Bigfoot's campus, the International Academy of Film and Television (IAFT) on Mactan Island.

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Foster and Bigfoot hope to finish work in two months. "[The documentary] will definitely premiere in Cebu and we'll submit it to different film festivals abroad."

It is only appropriate, the filmmaker said, for a film on Philippine history that is being completed with the help of Filipino artists and technicians, to debut on Philippine soil.

What led you to this project?

It all started with a phone call. My first project with Bigfoot was "Nautical Angels," a travel show set in Thailand. When they mentioned the "USS Cooper" docu, I immediately said yes because it has such depth and incredible emotion. It's about war. I mean, it makes a strong statement about war.

An anti-war statement?

Not anti-war. Of course, we are all against war, but this is not an anti-war docu. It's about wreck discoverer Rob Lalumiere placing a memorial plaque on the ship, for the 191 men who perished in it.

It tackles the human story. We interviewed those who knew the story best—old men who [had to kill people in the war]. Death had stared them in the face.

These men tell great stories. Take Hank Wagener, who's 81. He's not in the best of health. He has a bad leg, but he traveled all the way from Chicago to Ormoc to shoot the docu. He hadn't been there since USS Cooper sank. That last time, he spent 17 hours in the water.

I also interviewed 81-year-old Richard Sementelli, a 20-millimeter gunner on the USS Sumner, another ship in Ormoc Bay that night (the third ship was the Moale). His job was to gun down kamikaze pilots. He saw for himself the exact moment when the Cooper was hit by a torpedo.

TAKE FIVE

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What can we learn from the World War II veterans?

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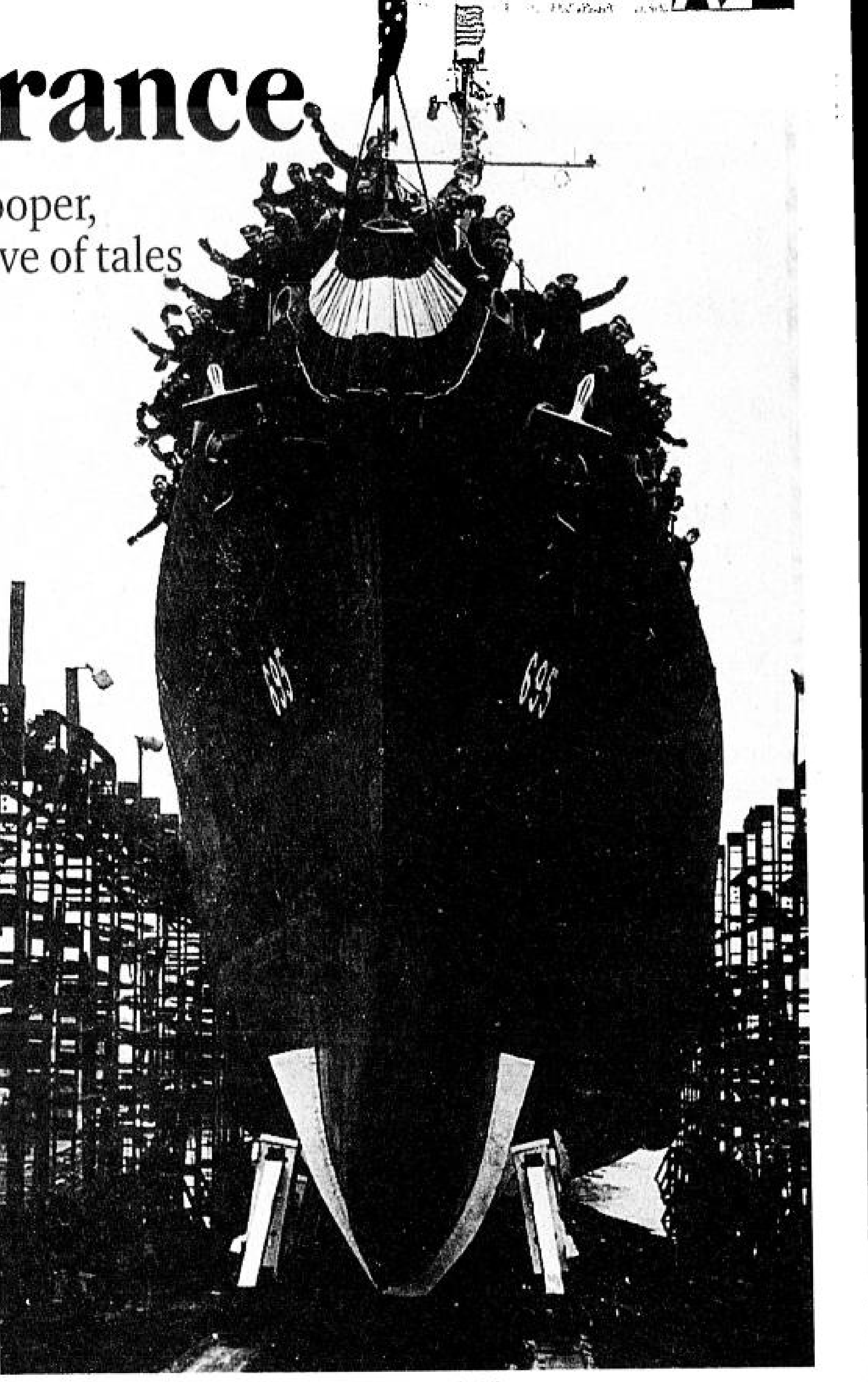

DOCUMENTARY showcases the work of Filipino technicians.

AT THE survivors' reunion in Baltimore last year: Skip Scibek, Tony Autorino, Hank Wagener and Daniel Foster.

THE DIRECTOR at work on the set of "USS Cooper" in Ormoc.

: I'd have nna P.5M

the feeling of being in there," he said. "It's like living in a different world with only a voice commanding you what to do. Only later, after you've fulfilled all your tasks that you'll understand how Big Brother was really just preparing you for the outside world."

"I missed Nancy (Castiglione) in the beginning," John admitted. He and Nancy had been seeing each other a few weeks before he became a housemate.

"We haven't talked," John confided. "I'm scared; I don't understand what's happening. I haven't even used my cell phone. A lot of things could have happened in two months, and I'm afraid to find out. If she's [still] there it would be, wow. If she's not, I wouldn't hurt too much."

Disconnected

He said his best friend, Luis Manzano, thought he wasn't acting normal. "I told him it felt weird talking to him," John said. "He said I was carrying on like a new kid in school. He got that right."

On Sunday morning, he had to show up for a pictorial, for his new movie, "Manay."

"Everybody was congratulating me. I tried to act normal," he said. "[But] still felt disconnected and disoriented. The psychologist said this was to be expected, and that I should not panic."

'Pinoy's Big Bother Conspiracy Edition'

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SHOW TIME

PAUL Anka

Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana.

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18th year 'Golgota'

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Last call

This week could be the last call for the latest edition of "Bedazzled" at Club Mwah in Mandaluyong. The show consists of breathtaking production numbers, diligently thought-out and painstakingly executed costumes, extremely attractive and skilled performers, plus the spirit of Las Vegas. "Everyone should see this," gushed actress Susan Roces, one of many distinguished celebrities who have seen previous incarnations of the revue put together by partners Cris Nicolas and Pocholo Mallilin. Call 631-6009 or 535-7943.

Benefit concert

POPULAR bands Shamrock and Intensity will rock the Institute of Creative Computer Technology-Cainta Campus in a benefit concert this April 8 at the sixth floor gymnasium of the school, which is located along VV Soliven Avenue II, Cainta, Rizal.

The concert hopes to raise funds for improvement projects for the school, which currently has 5,000 students.

ICCT is a Best Information Technology School awardee, an honor bestowed on the campus by the Consumer Choice and Dangal awards in 2004.

Tickets are now being sold at the campus.

LOU Veloso in "Martir sa Golgota"

Tonight

Margie Floirendo, Maan Hontiveros, Carmita Francisco and **Nina Romualdez** in the musical, "We're Still Hot!" at **Teatrino**, Greenhills Shopping Center. Call 891-9999.

Wunjo at **'70s Bistro**, Anonas Street, Quezon City

Mocha at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3

BO Sanchez and Rissa Singson

The Jerks at **'70s Bistro**, Anonas Street, Quezon City

Randy Santiago and **9th Avenue** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3

Tomorrow

Gregg Rolle's Santana at the **Araneta Coliseum**

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RJ 'n Friends with the **Members Band** at **RJ Guitar Bar**, Jupiter Street, Makati

Rivermaya at **Starmall Edsa**; 5 p.m.

April 8

Gregg Rolle's Santana at the **Clark Expo**, Pampanga

MYMP at the **Alegria Lounge** of the Casino Pavilion-Pavilion; 9 p.m. Tickets are available at SM Ticketnet and are sold at P1,000 (inclusive of one drink and P300 worth of bonus bets). Call 524-6648.

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Coffebreak Island at **'70s Bistro**, Anonas Street, Quezon City

Tribe of Levi at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3

MYMP

April 9

Iza Calzado at **Metropolis Star Alabang**; 4 p.m.

April 10

Strings of Soul and **Michaelangelo** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3

Michael Terry at **RJ Guitar Bar**, Jupiter Street, Makati

April 11

Strings of Soul and **MYMP** at **Tavern on the Square**

ENTERTAINMENT

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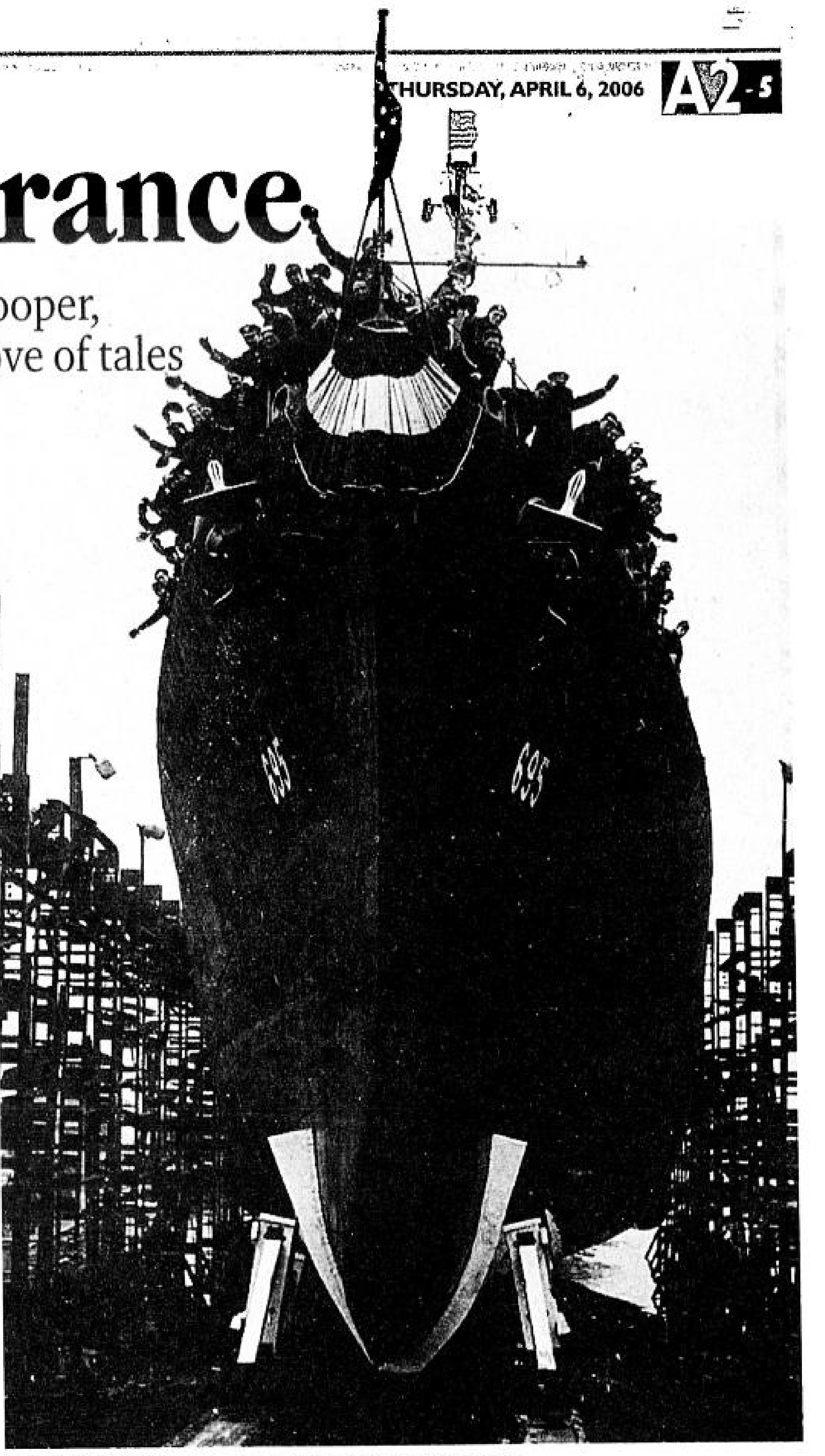

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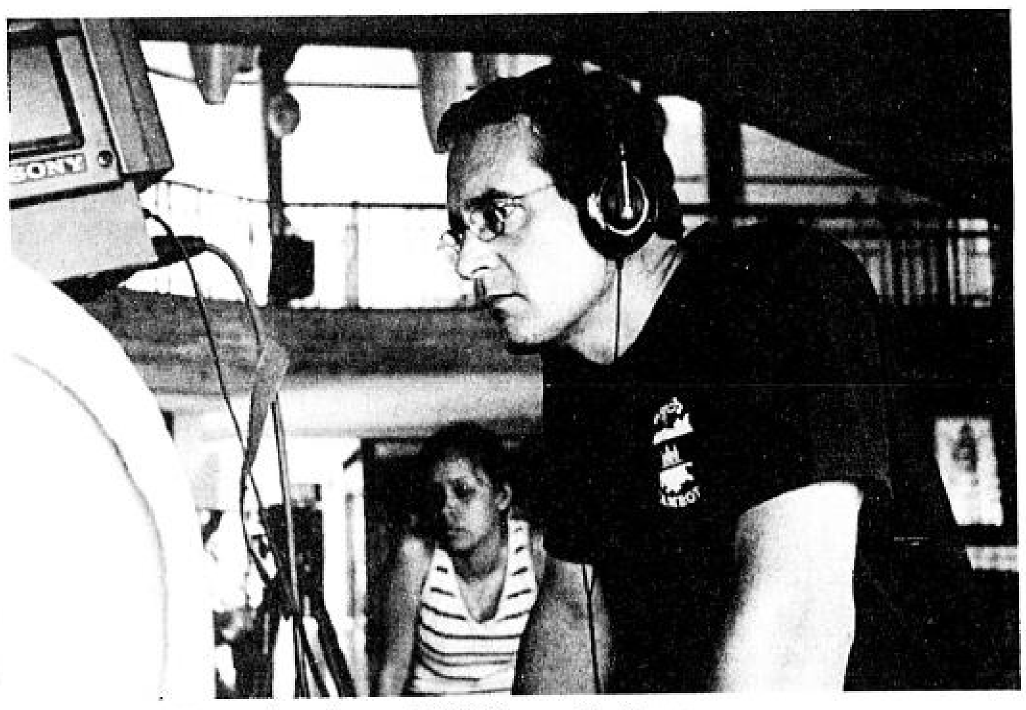

THE DIRECTOR at work on the set of "USS Cooper" in Ormoc.

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This year's Christ is Russel Sorillo. Participating celebrities are Tommy Abuel as Pontius Pilate, Ivy Violan as the Virgin Mary, Jenine Desiderio as Mary Magdalene, Bodjie Pascua as John the Baptist, Miguel Castro as the Angel and Juan dela Cruz, Allan Mirasol as Judas, Roanne Mallari as the hemorraghic, Ces Aldaba as Caiphas, Perry Dizon Escaño, Abel Napuran, Beats Rivera, Albert Jimenez, Frank Lorenzo, Vince Tañada and Pol Sy. Call 721-0801.

Last call

This week could be the last call for the latest edition of "Bedazzled" at Club Mwah in Mandaluyong. The show consists of breathtaking production numbers, diligently thought-out and painstakingly executed costumes, extremely attractive and skilled performers, plus the spirit of Las Vegas. "Everyone should see this," gushed actress Susan Roces, one of many distinguished celebrities who have seen previous incarnations of the revue put together by partners Cris Nicolas and Pocholo Malilin. Call 631-6009 or 535-7943.

Benefit concert

POPULAR bands Shamrock and Intensity will rock the Institute of Creative Computer Technology-Cainta Campus in a benefit concert this April 8 at the sixth floor gymnasium of the school, which is located along VV Soliven Avenue II, Cainta, Rizal.

The concert hopes to raise funds for improvement projects for the school, which currently has 5,000 students.

ICCT is a Best Information Technology School awardee, an honor bestowed on the campus by the Consumer Choice and Dangal awards in 2004.

Tickets are now being sold at the campus.

LOU Veloso in "Martir sa Golgota"

Tonight

Margie Floirendo, Maan Hontiveros, Carmita Francisco and **Nina Romualdez** in the musical, "We're Still Hot!" at **Teatrino**, Greenhills Shopping Center. Call 891-9999.

Wunjo at **'70s Bistro**, Anonas Street, Quezon City

Mocha at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3

BO Sanchez and Rissa Singson

The Jerks at **'70s Bistro**, Anonas Street, Quezon City

Randy Santiago and **9th Avenue** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3

Tomorrow

Gregg Rolle's Santana at the **Araneta Coliseum**

Margie Floirendo, Maan Hontiveros, Carmita Francisco and **Nina Romualdez** in the musical, "We're Still Hot!" at **Teatrino**, Greenhills Shopping Center. Call 891-9999.

RJ 'n Friends with the **Members Band at RJ Guitar Bar**, Jupiter Street, Makati

Rivermaya at **Starmall Edsa**; 5 p.m.

April 8

Gregg Rolle's Santana at the **Clark Expo**, Pampanga

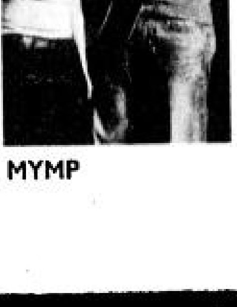
MYMP at the **Alegria Lounge** of the Casino Pavilion-Pavilion; 9 p.m. Tickets are available at SM Ticketnet and are sold at P1,000 (inclusive of one drink and P300 worth of bonus bets). Call 524-6648.

Margie Floirendo, Maan Hontiveros, Carmita Francisco and **Nina Romualdez** in the musical, "We're Still Hot!" at **Teatrino**, Greenhills Shopping Center. Call 891-9999.

Mr. God and Company at **RJ Guitar Bar**, Jupiter Street, Makati

Coffebreak Island at **'70s Bistro**, Anonas Street, Quezon City

Tribe of Levi at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3



MYMP

April 9

Iza Calzado at **Metropolis Star Alabang**; 4 p.m.

April 10

Strings of Soul and **Michaelangelo** at **Tavern on the Square**, Greenbelt 3

Michael Terry at **RJ Guitar Bar**, Jupiter Street, Makati

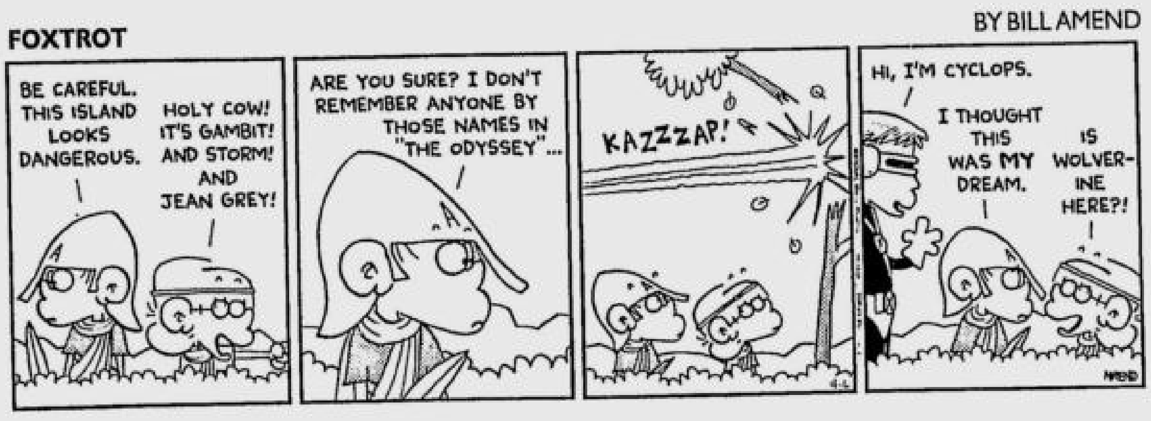
April 11

Strings of Soul and **MYMP** at **Tavern on the Square**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

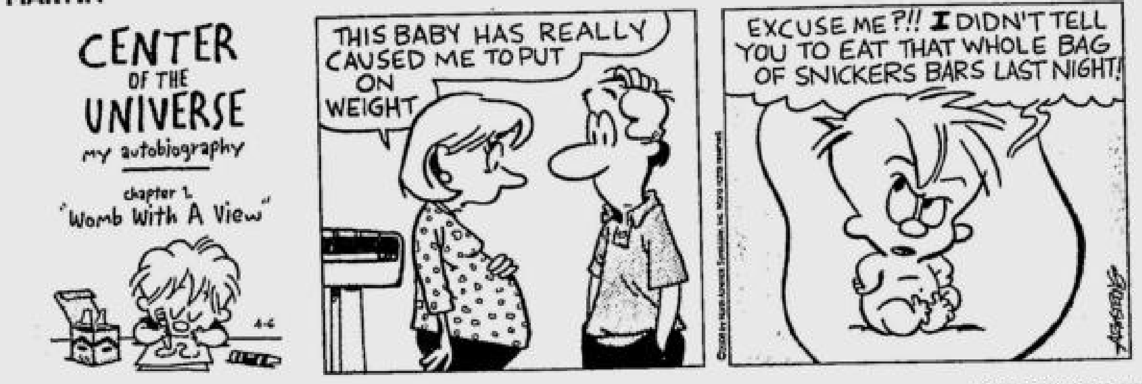
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


BE CAREFUL. THIS ISLAND LOOKS DANGEROUS.
HOLY COW! IT'S GAMBIT! AND STORM! AND JEAN GREY!
ARE YOU SURE? I DON'T REMEMBER ANYONE BY THOSE NAMES IN "THE ODYSSEY"...
KAZZZAP!
HI, I'M CYCLOPS.
I THOUGHT THIS WAS MY DREAM.
IS WOLVERINE HERE?!

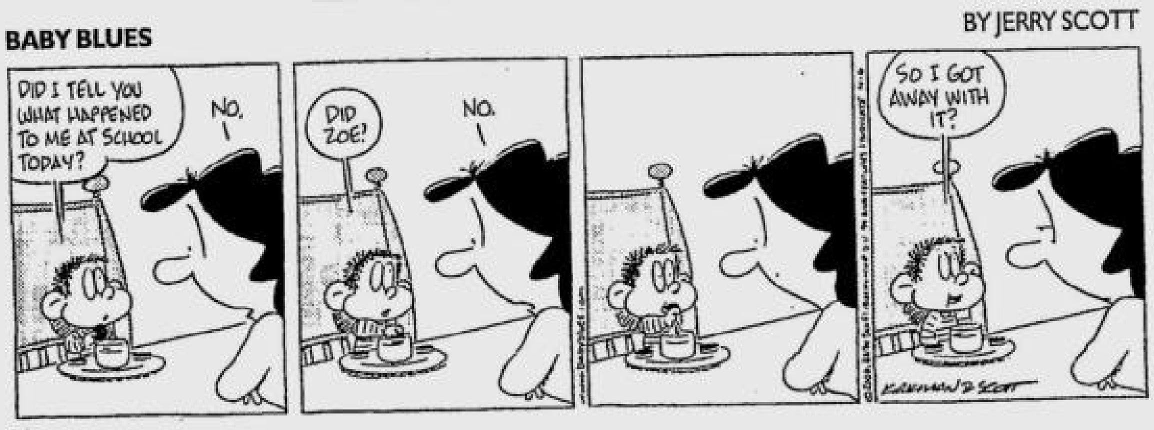
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE
my autobiography
chapter 1
"Womb With A View"
THIS BABY HAS REALLY CAUSED ME TO PUT ON WEIGHT
EXCUSE ME?!! I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO EAT THAT WHOLE BAG OF SNICKERS BARS LAST NIGHT!

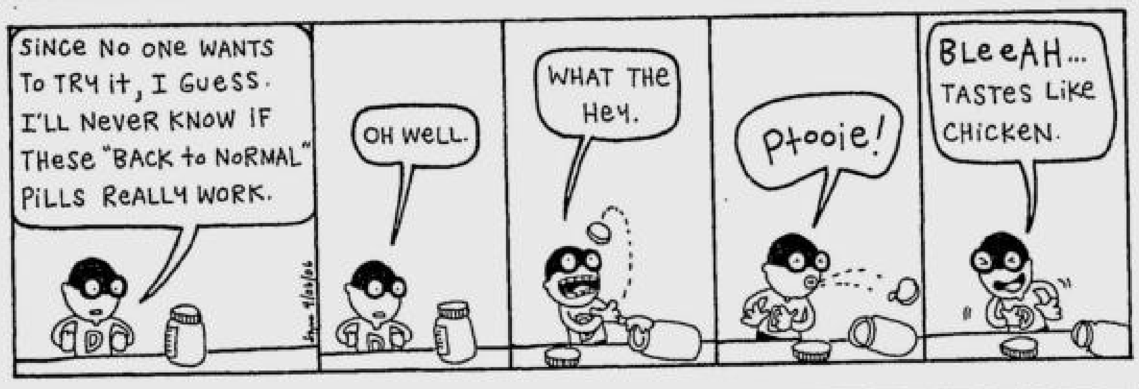
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DID I TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED TO ME AT SCHOOL TODAY?
NO.
DID ZOE?
NO.
SO I GOT AWAY WITH IT?

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SINCE NO ONE WANTS TO TRY IT, I GUESS. I'LL NEVER KNOW IF THESE "BACK TO NORMAL" PILLS REALLY WORK.
OH WELL.
WHAT THE HEY.
Ptooie!
BLEEAH... TASTES LIKE CHICKEN.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You work hard to succeed at what you want. You're imaginative and innovative. You have the mind of a scientist and the vision of a poet. You're adventurous and willing to try anything. One cycle in your life is finishing now; let go of something in order to create room for something new.

Birthdate of: Merle Haggard, singer; Marilu Henner, actress; Harry Houdini, magician/escape artist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Seek out opportunities to enjoy beautiful surroundings in solitude. You need time to be alone. But you want to do it pleasantly.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Time spent with friends, especially groups and clubs, will please you now. You need to talk to others about your goals and dreams for the future because their feedback can help you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Without doing anything extra, somehow you seem to impress important people now. You're simply in the right place at the right time, saying the right thing to the right person. Good for you!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your appreciation of beauty is definitely heightened now. Give yourself an opportunity to enjoy music, architecture, the arts, dance, film—whatever. Visit a beautiful park.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Others are helpful to you now. People are prepared to give you things and lend you emotional and psychological support. (You're very fortunate.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): With Venus opposite your sign, your dealings with others will greatly improve for the next few weeks. It's easy to be friendly with everyone!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Conditions at work will improve beautifully in the next few weeks. Time spent with coworkers will be pleasant and rewarding. You'll like your job better. (Whew!)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Make plans to get away for a vacation. You want to have fun! This is one of the best times all year for you to do this. (Romance and love affairs are also promising!)

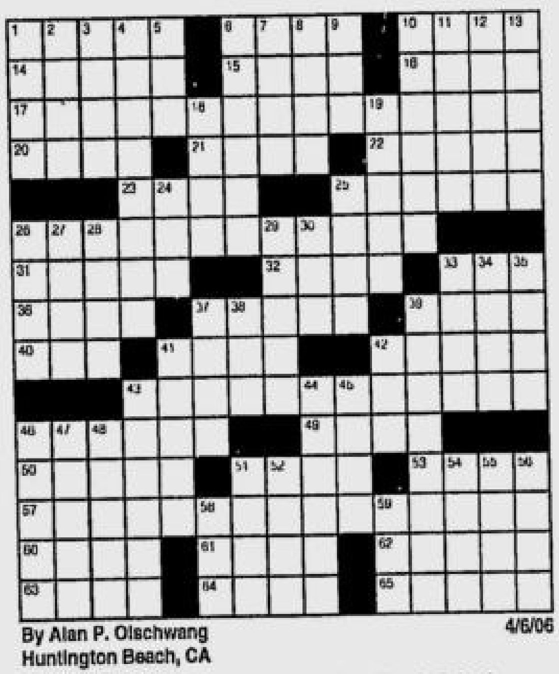
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is the time to entertain at home. It's also a good time to buy beautiful things to make your home more attractive. Perhaps you'll want to treat a family member.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Writing, reading and study please you now. Some of you will figure out a way to make your writing pay. Others will earn more through sales, marketing and teaching.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Trust your moneymaking hunches! You've got good ideas about how to increase your earnings; similarly, you have good ideas about how to spend money as well!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Now that fair Venus is in your sign, your ability to deal with others is beautifully enhanced. Without any extra effort at all on your part, you're charming and diplomatic. People love you.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

4/6/06

ACROSS
1 Dish in a lab
6 Eurasian vipers
10 Sink alternative
14 Bitter
15 Takei's "Star Trek" role
16 Mexican menu item
17 Start of Evan Esar quote
20 Stockings
21 Bohemian
22 Johnnycakes
23 Casa part
25 Supermarket adjunct
26 Part 2 of quote
31 Second showing
32 Ireland, poetically
33 "Xanadu" band
36 Bridge position
37 Gulls' cousins
39 Distinctive flair
40 Before, to bards
41 Black and Red
42 Stage whisper
43 Part 3 of quote
46 Merging
49 Book after Neh.
50 Dwelling place
51 Nemesis
53 Cote residents
57 End of quote
60 Highlands hats
61 Actor Sharif
62 Actress Tea
63 Leave text in!
64 Long-snouted fish
65 Ran in place

DOWN
1 Maze solution
2 Canyon rebound
3 Most on the Moselle
4 Weathers, as a storm
5 A mean Amin
6 Off the mark
7 Long or strong follower
8 Gambit
9 Soak up some rays
10 Golf shot
11 John known as Duke
12 More frigid
13 Lichen-covered
18 Phone
19 Swiftly
24 Arbor of Michigan
25 Taverns
26 Shade provider
27 Now __ this!
28 Gaelic of the Highlands
29 Intrinsically
30 Vietnam Memorial artist
33 Writer Wiesel
34 Young men
35 Entities
37 Adolescent
38 Serving of corn
39 Avoided
41 Pumps and flats
42 Do something
43 Broadest
44 Mexicali misters
45 PC operator
46 Information
47 Undersea menace of WWII
48 French river
51 Synagogue platform
52 From a great distance
54 Eye cover?
55 Donegal Bay feeder
56 Low wooden platform
58 Cranberries site
59 Samuel's teacher

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

A	B	E	L	■	S	E	T	S	■	E	N	E	R	O
S	O	L	I	■	P	E	R	P	■	S	O	N	A	R
T	I	L	T	S	A	N	A	I	R	C	R	A	F	T
A	L	A	R	I	C	■	P	R	O	A	M	■	■	■
■	■	■	E	X	E	S	■	A	S	P	■	A	P	T
■	B	A	S	E	B	A	L	L	S	E	R	N	I	E
L	A	R	■	S	A	K	I	■	■	E	A	G	L	E
O	R	L	E	■	R	E	L	I	C	■	E	L	O	N
A	R	E	T	E	■	■	A	L	O	U	■	E	T	S
F	I	N	A	N	C	E	C	E	N	T	E	R	S	■
S	E	E	■	C	O	N	■	A	N	I	L	■	■	■
■	■	■	E	L	I	T	E	■	I	C	A	R	U	S
R	O	W	S	O	F	E	L	E	V	A	T	O	R	S
D	R	A	M	S	■	R	O	B	E	■	E	M	I	T
A	G	R	E	E	■	S	I	B	S	■	S	A	S	S

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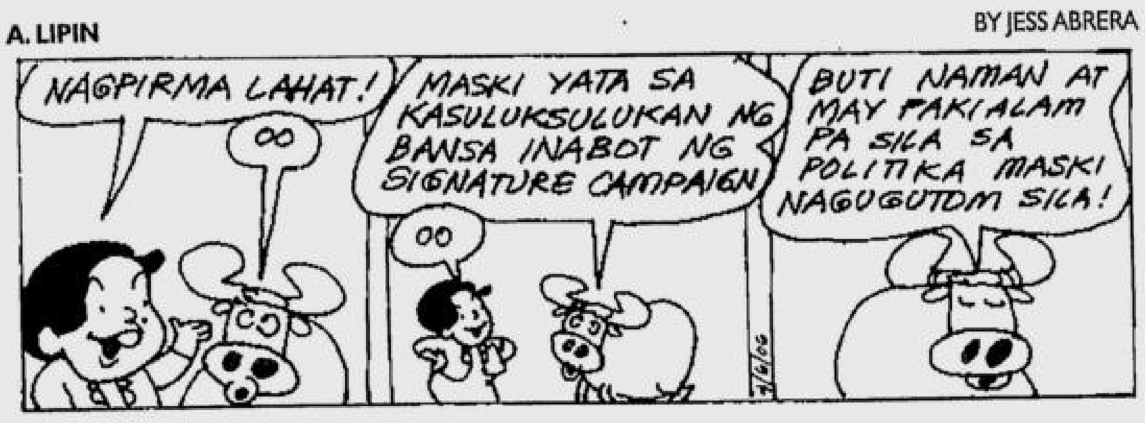
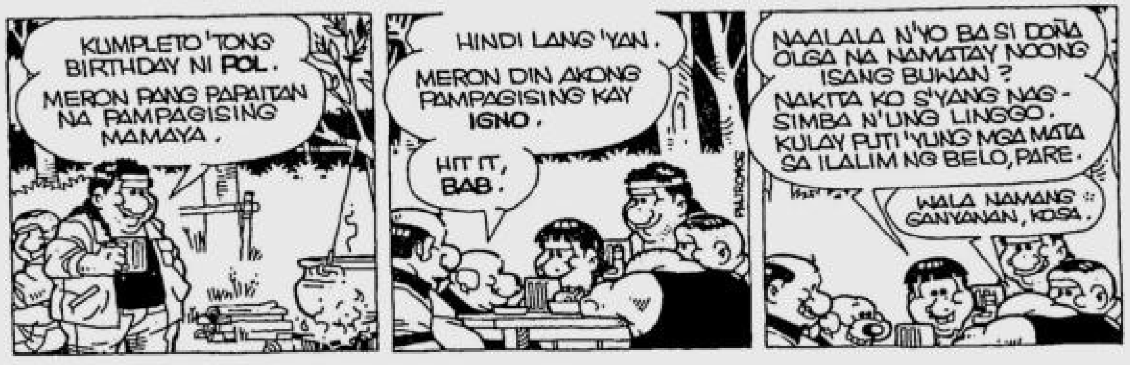
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NAGPIRMA LAHAT!
OO
MASKI YATA SA KASULUKSULUKAN NG BANSA INABOT NG SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN
OO
BUTI NAMAN AT MAY PAKIALAM PA SILA SA POLITIKA MASKI NAGUGUTOM SILA!

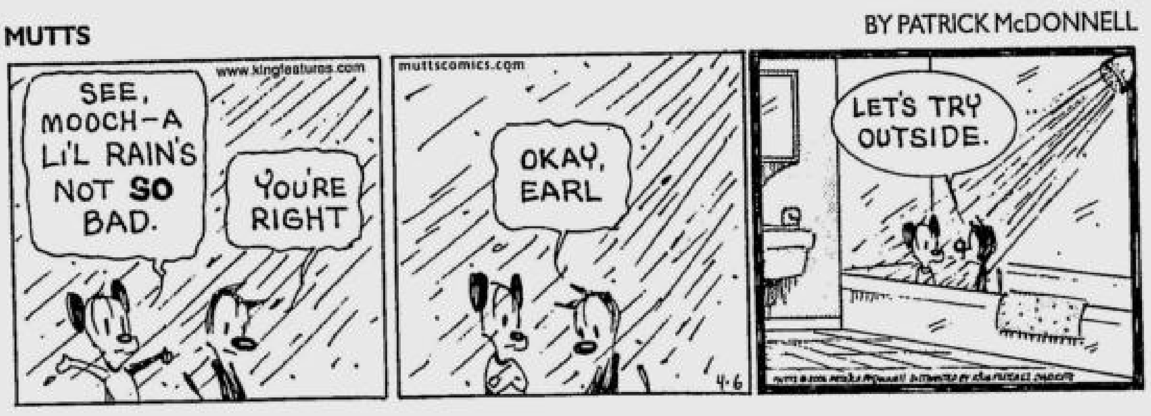
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


KUMPLETO 'TONG BIRTHDAY NI POL.
MERON PANG PAPAITAN NA PAMPAGISING MAMAYA.
HINDI LANG 'YAN.
MERON DIN AKONG PAMPAGISING KAY IGNO.
HIT IT, BAB.
NAALALA N'YO BA SI DOÑA OLGA NA NAMATAY NOONG ISANG BUWAN? NAKITA KO S'YANG NAGSIMBA N'UNG LINGGO. KULAY PUTI 'YUNG MGA MATA SA ILALIM NG BELO, PARE.
WALA NAMANG GANYANAN, KOSA.

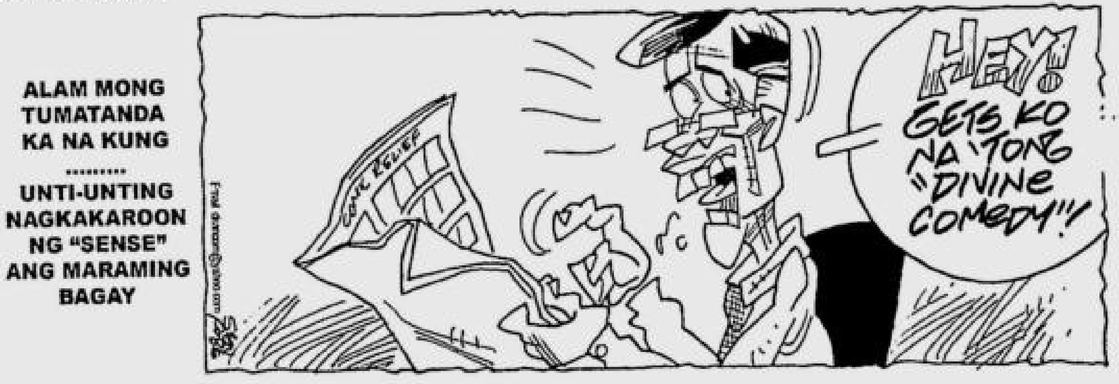
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


www.kingfeatures.com
SEE, MOOCH—A LI'L RAIN'S NOT SO BAD.
YOU'RE RIGHT
muttscomics.com
OKAY, EARL
LET'S TRY OUTSIDE.

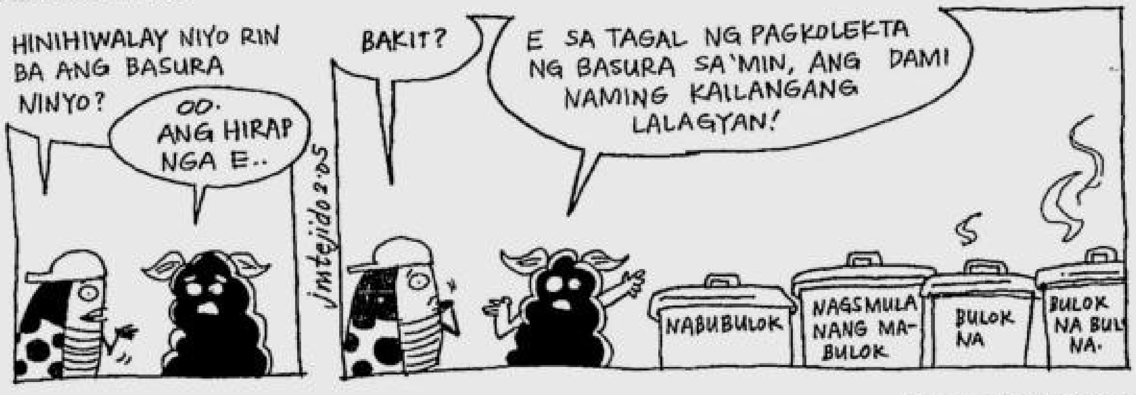
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ALAM MONG TUMATANDA KA NA KUNG
....
UNTI-UNTING NAGKAKAROON NG "SENSE" ANG MARAMING BAGAY
COMIC RELIEF
HEY! GETS KO NA 'TONG "DIVINE COMEDY"!

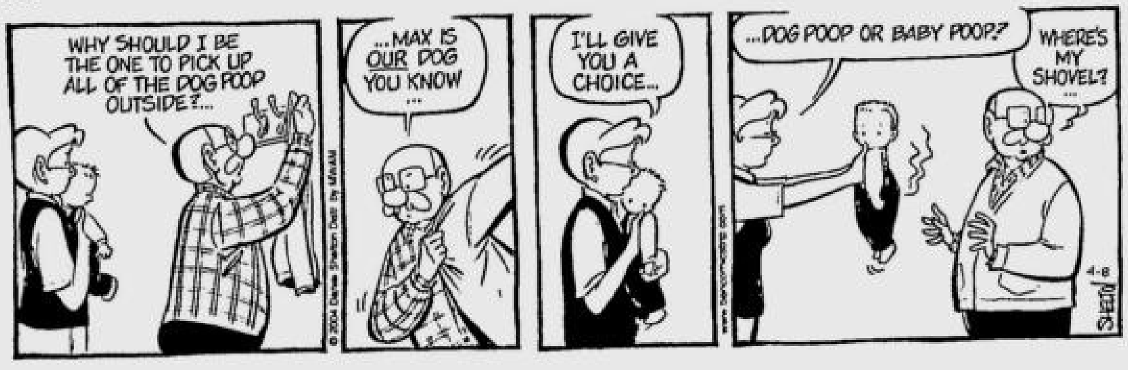
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HINIHIWALAY NIYO RIN BA ANG BASURA NINYO?
OO. ANG HIRAP NGA E..
BAKIT?
E SA TAGAL NG PAGKOLEKTA NG BASURA SA'MIN, ANG DAMI NAMING KAILANGANG LALAGYAN!
NABUBULOK
NAGSMULA NANG MABULOK
BULOK NA
BULOK NA BULOK NA.

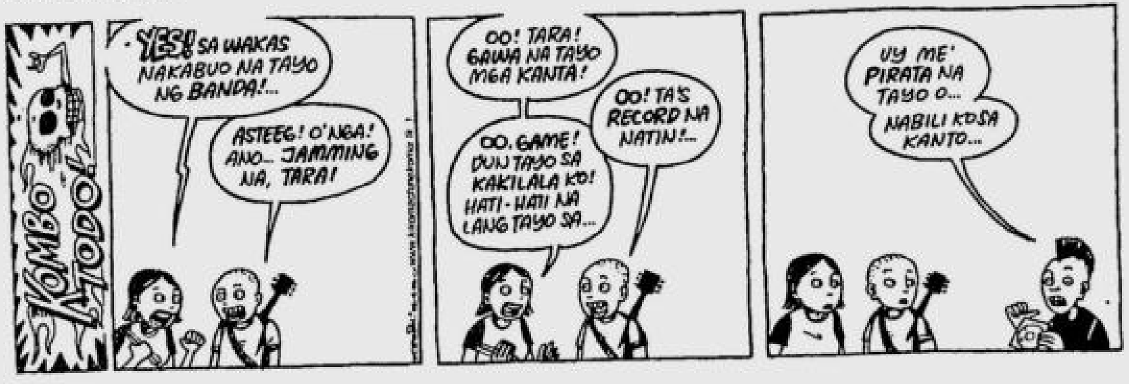
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WHY SHOULD I BE THE ONE TO PICK UP ALL OF THE DOG POOP OUTSIDE?...
...MAX IS OUR DOG YOU KNOW ...
I'LL GIVE YOU A CHOICE...
...DOG POOP OR BABY POOP?
WHERE'S MY SHOVEL? ...

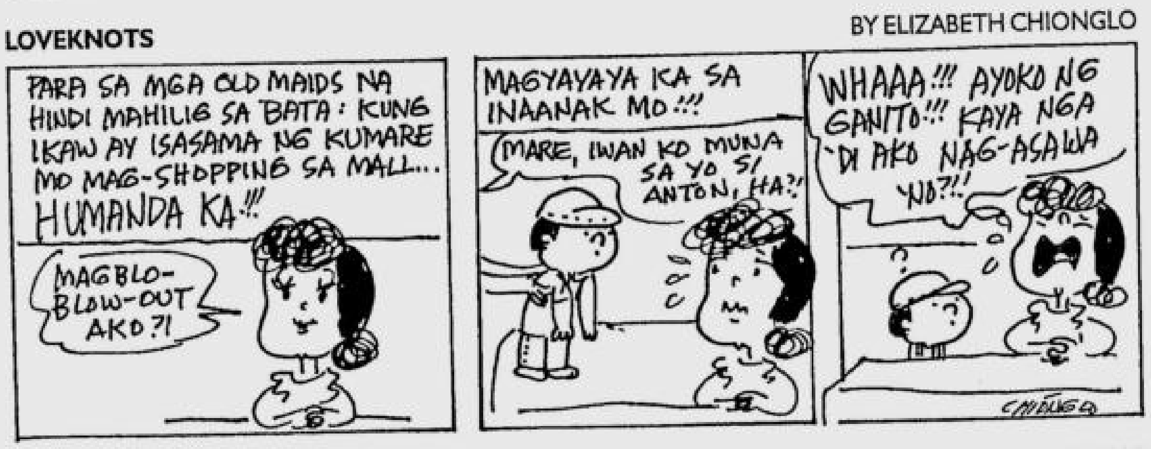
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KOMBO TODO!
YES! SA WAKAS NAKABUO NA TAYO NG BANDA!...
ASTEEG! O'NGA! ANO... JAMMING NA, TARA!
OO! TARA! GAWA NA TAYO MGA KANTA!
OO! TA'S RECORD NA NATIN!...
OO, GAME! DUN TAYO SA KAKILALA KO! HATI-HATI NA LANG TAYO SA...
UY ME' PIRATA NA TAYO O... NABILI KO SA KANTO...

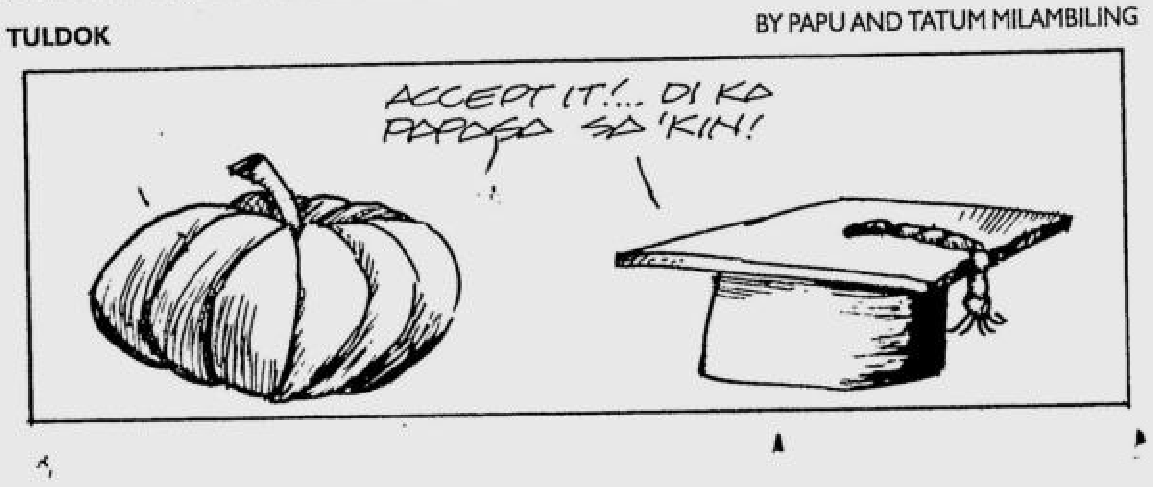
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PARA SA MGA OLD MAIDS NA HINDI MAHILIG SA BATA: KUNG IKAW AY ISASAMA NG KUMARE MO MAG-SHOPPING SA MALL... HUMANDA KA!!!
MAGBLO-BLOW-OUT AKO?!
MAGYAYAYA KA SA INAANAK MO!!!
MARE, IWAN KO MUNA SA YO SI ANTON, HA?!
WHAAA!!! AYOKO NG GANITO!!! KAYA NGA 'DI AKO NAG-ASAWA 'NO?!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ACCEPT IT!... DI KA PAPOGA SA 'KIN!

Jules tells Assunta to stop talking on TV

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Ann Carvajal

ASSUNTA DE ROSSI IS BACK IN fighting form. It must be the Italian in her! She revealed on "Startalk" that her husband's (**Jules Ledesma**) relatives are fighting over their inheritance. The fiery beauty also said ABS-CBN president **Gabby Lopez** "killed" her career because he didn't give her enough projects when she was under an exclusive contract with the network. The Lopezes happen to be Jules' cousins. I texted Assunta to ask if Jules had given her the go signal to wash his clan's dirty linen in public, and whether Gabby had reacted to her accusation. She replied, "My hubby doesn't want me to talk about it anymore. What's important is nobody contested what I said 'cause I spoke the truth."

Would anyone with an angelic face like hers lie?

Middle name: Scandal

KEANNA Reeves during the PBB Big Night
RUDY ESPERAS

Speaking of being true, that was **Keanna Reeves'** passport to victory in "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition." So I guess she'd better change her screen name to something less phony-sounding. She can very well be **Ethel Booba's** counterpart in ABS-CBN. Their appeal are both "masang-masa"—as Ms Simpletons who utter "jologs" remarks with perfect timing. And scandal seems to be their shared middle name. Who can forget Keanna's Senate exposé on escort girls and Ethel's alleged sex video with her ex-boyfriend **Alex Crisano**? It remains to be seen who will outdo who between these two voluptuous comediennes with voluminous controversies hounding them!

ASSUNTA in fighting form.

Switching partners

Heard that **Nancy Castiglione's** ex, **Bullet Jalosjos**, is now **Katrina Halili's** boyfriend. Rigodon of partners in show biz is nothing new. Even in Hollywood, it's all the partner-switching that makes the world go round and the rumor mill churning. As for Nancy's ex, **Paolo Contis**, is it true that when they split up he got back the three-carat diamond ring he gave Nancy? My source insists that Paolo had to return the rock to the jeweller because he got it on a two-year payment scheme. Unfortunately his romance with Nancy went kaput before the ring was fully paid. Diamonds are forever but love is not always so. And it takes a lifetime paying for those symbolic stones of everlasting (?) love.

NANCY: Where's the ring?

Gary V in a movie

Text from **Angeli Pangilinan-Valenciano**: "Friends! Good news! Gary, **Erik Matti** and **Dondon Monteverde** of Reality Ent. met last night in UCC Podium for a film that Gary is going to star in. Second meeting *na*! Paolo and Gabriel are part of it. *Galing 'no?* God is good. Workshop for the boys on Monday! Dondon is the *ninong* of Gabriel... Mother Lily gave Gary V a break in 1986 with 'Horsey Horsey!' Now her son ... Praise God."

Lovable Chaka

Chaka Doll will soon be back in the boob tube when "Kakabakaboo" starts airing again by the end of April. Funny that a mascot like Chaka is more effective as a host/narrator than some trying-hard TV personalities. Never a dull moment with lovable Chaka Doll!

Dennis' crush

Heard that **Dennis Trillo's** latest crush is his leading lady in the sanitary napkin ad. The girl is half-Pinay and half-German. Is the ever elusive Dennis already on the lookout for a better half?

DENNIS has new crush.

Summer Workshop

Theater, acting, singing, reading, storytelling, playing—kids can enjoy the summer while learning! The Philippine Drama Company presents "Merkland: Theatre by Children," a summer workshop at Merk's Bar & Bistro, April 17 for kids aged 8 to 12 and April 18 for kids aged 4 to 7. Call 750-1481 to 82 or 810-1631 local 101.

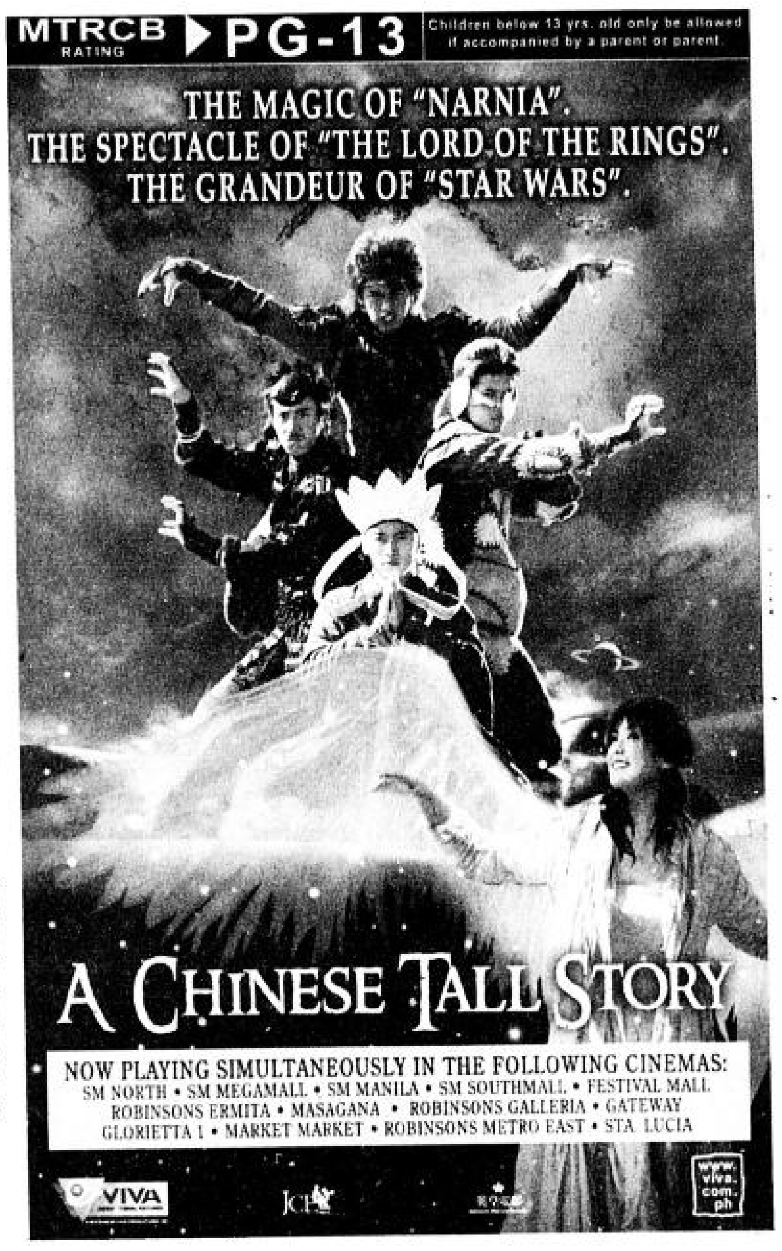
Reader's corner

Hi Dolly,

I just wanted to comment on the Bulagaan portion last Saturday with Sugar, Joey and Wally or Jose as performers. They made Sugar dress up like the Virgin Mary, complete with a veil, and Wally held an arch above her as she marched, like in a procession, to the tune of "Ave Maria." This is unacceptable. It is not right to mimic Mama Mary just for laughs. Maybe I just misinterpreted the presentation but I really hope they use their better judgment all the time. I hope MTRCB reviews that segment and evaluates it.

Thanks,
Charo Tolentino

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)


MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or parent.
THE MAGIC OF "NARNIA".
THE SPECTACLE OF "THE LORD OF THE RINGS".
THE GRANDEUR OF "STAR WARS".
A CHINESE TALL STORY
NOW PLAYING SIMULTANEOUSLY IN THE FOLLOWING CINEMAS:
SM NORTH • SM MEGAMALL • SM MANILA • SM SOUTHMALL • FESTIVAL MALL
ROBINSONS ERMITA • MASAGANA • ROBINSONS GALLERIA • GATEWAY
GLORIETTA 1 • MARKET MARKET • ROBINSONS METRO EAST • STA LUCIA

REVIEW

Steamy but sluggish

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

SULTRY SHARON STONE RETURNS AS vampy crime author Catherine Tramell in the somewhat steamy but sluggish "Basic Instinct 2: Risk Addiction". Fourteen years after her breakthrough performance as a sexually active murderess, Stone is still luscious, but the character has become vacuous. Tramell is now an all-seeing manipulator, a perpetually smirking "risk addict" whose lines are mostly self-promoting declarations. Subtlety and suspense (and articles of clothing) are, not surprisingly, shamelessly and quickly ditched.

The best-selling novelist is now based in London, living dangerously but below the radar as usual, until one of her escapades lands her in the news. Implicated in the death of a celebrated athlete, the smug Catherine gets the ire of surly Detective Washburn (David Thewlis). She's soon introduced to his colleague, psychiatrist Dr. Michael Glass (David Morrissey), who, surely enough, becomes entangled in her web of deception and sexual adventures.

The hunt

We almost pity him as soon as he shows up. But obvious sparks fly, so the hunt commences.

After much resistance, and several violent incidents pointing to someone quite expected, Michael gives in. The whole series of events leading to the consummation is a prolonged and tiring foreplay, leaving very little to expect after the deed is done. Do we care for them after that? Heck, no.

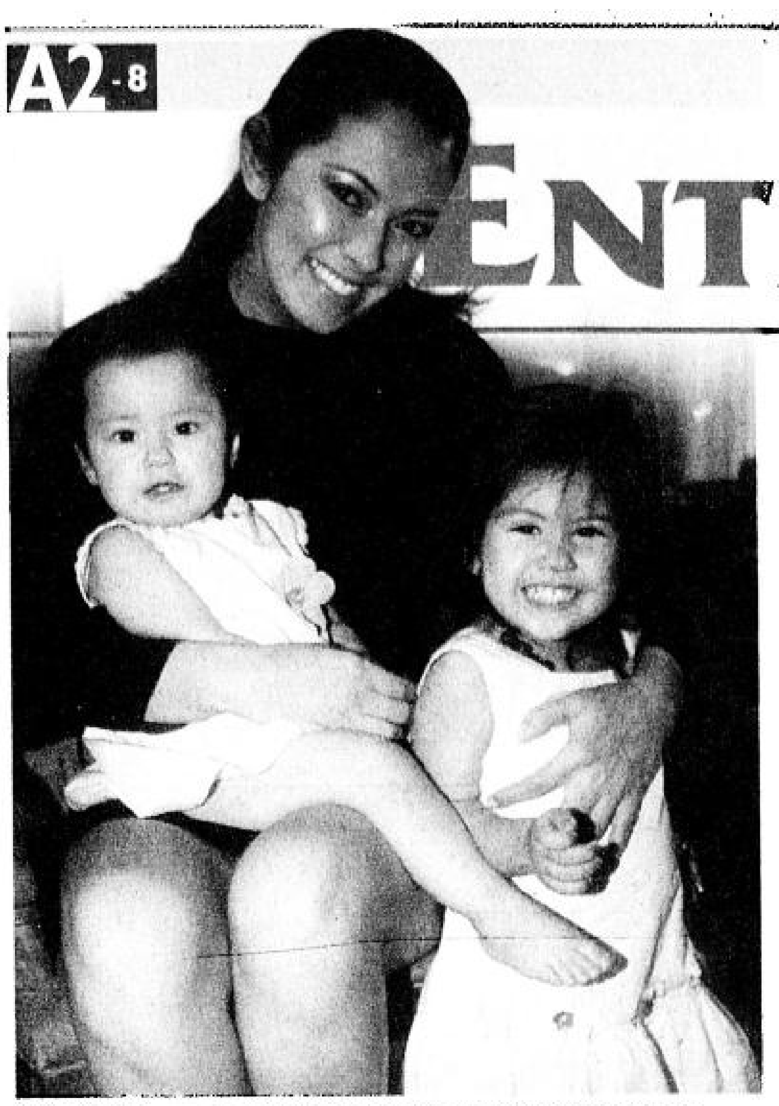
Morrissey should be able to get more high-profile Hollywood work after this. He's capable and charismatic; his portrayal of the typical dichotomy—a saintly professional that's also a very sexual being—does wonders for this film. But still, it's hard to take the whole thing seriously when the scenes shift from unintentionally funny to downright campy. Stone, for all that heat, seems to have outgrown the role—it just doesn't fit anymore.

2ND WEEK IN THE FOLLOWING THEATERS:
GLORIETTA 1&4. GREENBELT 1&3. POWERPLANT. Shangri-La. Gateway. Festival. Alabang Town. Robinson's (ERMITA, GALLERIA, METROEAST, PIONEER, NOVALICHES,LETRE). CINERAMA. Gotoco City. ROBEN. WalterMart MAKATI. Market-Market. EastWood. BLUEWAVE. Sta. Lucia. Starmall. ABC. All Mall. Greenhills. REMAR. Metropolis. Gotesco GRAND. Gotesco COMMONWEALTH. Masagana PASAY. (CEBU) Ayala. EMALL. Oriente. Cineplex. Cinema. (DAVAO) Gaisano. Victoria. JS. NCCC.
MTRCB R-18
SEDUCTION MANIPULATION PERVERSION
Everything begins in the mind.

NOW SHOWING
MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP
IT'S "AMERICAN PIE" MEETS "THE 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN"
AN ALL-STAR POWERHOUSE CAST!!!
DORIS ROBERTS star of EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND
LINDA CARDELLINI star of BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
FEATURING: The Cousin of King Kong HARRY THE KARATE CHIMP
ALLEN COVERT star of THE LONGEST YARD
DAVID SPADE star of SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE
ROB SCHNEIDER star of DEUCE BIGALOW
From Producer ADAM SANDLER
GRANDMA'S BOY

MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
Sexy Women, High Adventure & Non-Stop Action. A $60M Giant Production from LUC BESSON & 20th Century Fox
MOVE OVER ZORRO...
HERE COMES THE NEW HEROES OF THE POOR AND OPPRESSED
THE GOOD GIRLS VERSUS THE BAD BOYS
NOW SHOWING
FEAR NO MAN
SALMA HAYEK
PENÉLOPE CRUZ
BANDIDAS

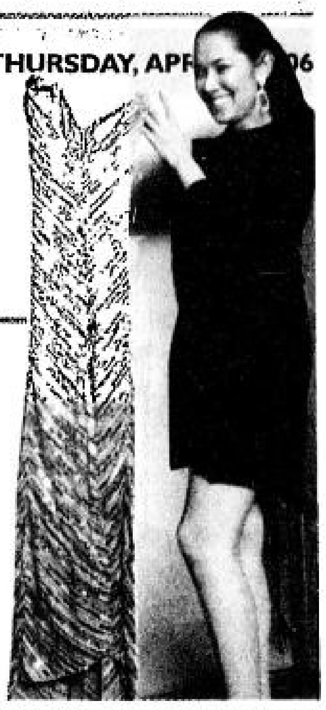
ENTERTAINMENT



SEXINESS is not about brief tops and short skirts, says this sexy mother of two girls, Venice (left) and Lorin.

BAG lover Ruffa buys all that she fancies in all brands. She shares them, anyway, with mom Annabelle Rama.

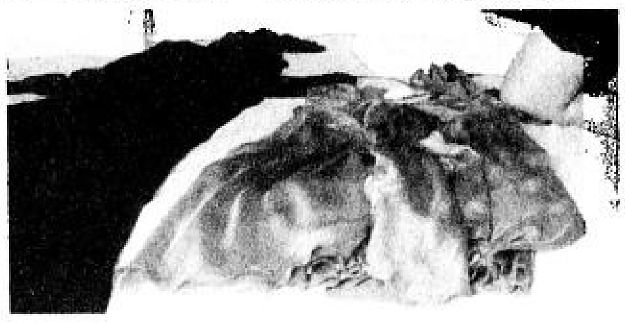
"ANIMAL killer!" Yilmaz chides her about this Gucci python bag.



SLINKY Missoni number that she wore when Yilmaz proposed.

GOLD dangling earrings from Turkey, where gold is inexpensive.

KEEP 'em simple, like these dainty bracelets from Dior.



ALBERTA Ferretti creations are perfect for her charity events in Istanbul.

Just a few of Ruffa's favorite things

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

ACTRESS-BEAUTY QUEEN Ruffa Gutierrez returned to her home in Istanbul, Turkey, on Sunday, four days after the turnover of funds from her successful fundraiser to the United Children's Fund (Unicef) and the Philippine National Red Cross.

Ruffa organized "Celebrity Tiangge for Leyte" for the survivors of the recent killer mudslide in Southern Leyte. As a result of its success, Ruffa said show biz colleagues are eager for a Part 2.

"I'm seriously considering that," she told INQUIRER Entertainment last week during an interview at the Discovery Suites in Mandaluyong. "It's hard work."

For now, it's rest, recreation and reunion with her husband, Turkish businessman Yilmaz Bektas, and their two daughters, Lorin and Venice.

In Istanbul, Ruffa is president of Fashion TV channel. The Bektases acquired the company in March 2005 and relaunched it five months later, in August. Ruffa said, "After having two kids, I told Yilmaz I need to be busy. He suggested different enterprises—a spa, a retail business and olive oil or salsa factory. But I know little about these things."

She told her husband that since she had been working in front of the cameras since she was 13, she knew what viewers liked to see on TV.

"As president of the company, I have to make sure everything is running well," Ruffa explained. "But I don't go to work everyday. We hired a general manager and a full staff. I just give orders via e-mail or phone. That way I can stay home and take care of the kids and still do my thing."

During an earlier visit, Ruffa gave INQUIRER Entertainment a peek into her closet, plus tips on how to become a charmer like herself. "Sexiness is not about plunging necklines or really short skirts," she said. "It's about how you carry yourself. You can look sexy without revealing too much."

As for her favorite clothes, Ruffa said, "It depends on where I am. In Turkey, I dress more conservatively. In the US, I'm a little freer. Here (in the Philippines), it depends on the occasion."

Yilmaz's opinion is a major factor in her choices. "I know what he likes and doesn't like me to wear ... and I want to please him, first and foremost. He prefers the casual look—he likes me in cargo pants and T-shirts."

Her fashion advice to Filipinas: "Wear whatever makes you feel comfortable. Confidence radiates from within. Filipinas today are more stylish. Five years ago, everybody just wore lose T-shirts and jeans. Now, everyone's very trendy and girls wear make-up."

OUT OF THE CLOSET

CLOTHES

"I like this white Dolce & Gabanna top that I bought in Istanbul. It's very simple. You can wear it with anything—like casual jeans and even under a tuxedo. I also like this black YSL top. I got this in Paris and I've not worn it yet. I'm saving it for a special occasion.

"I bought this (yellow tie-dyed) top for going to the beach. I like its Bohemian look. I originally planned to wear this with a bikini but I'm now using it for going out. I just put a nice tank underneath. It's good with jeans or capri. This is really great to wear after giving birth. It covers the unwanted fat.

"This (holds up a slinky gown) is very special because I was wearing it when Yilmaz proposed to me. We were in Miami on New Year's Eve. He bought this for me. It's by Missoni. At the Delano Hotel, he asked me to marry him. Of course I said yes right away (laughs). Yilmaz is my stylist in Istanbul.

"Alberta Ferretti is my favorite designer now. I got one black and one green dress from her collection. I wore the green dress at a fundraiser for kids with lukemia.

"I brought my cargo pants with me—the ones that Yilmaz likes—I had them altered here. I have lost 50 lbs. since giving birth to Venice. I bought this pair in LA. It's about a year old. I like it because I can wear it with heels or with sneakers, with a T-shirt or a dressy top."

ACCESSORIES

"People in Istanbul, where gold is cheap, are really into gold jewelry. I bought my dangling earrings there. They are 24-karat gold. They're very unique. I also bought a necklace to match. If I want to look Turkish, I wear this set.

"When I'm here, I just wear my regular diamonds. People here like it simple. Some of my diamonds were gifts from Yilmaz; some I've had for a long time.

"The cutest accessories I've bought so far are made of wood. I think I bought them in London. Whenever I wear them, my in-laws would tease me. They'd say, 'When our house burns down you'd be the first to go with it.' But I like it. It's fresh; it makes me look young."

BAGS

"Yilmaz and I fought over this Gucci python bag. He told me, 'You're helping kill the snakes.' He loves animals. (We had a pet crocodile—in our house—for a couple of years. His name was Enzo. When we had our second child, Yilmaz donated it to the zoo.) I still use this bag a lot. It never goes out of style. But I keep it out of sight when Yilmaz is around.

"I use this D&G bag whenever I go shopping. You can put everything in it; it's very spacious. And you can use it with any outfit.

"I buy all kinds of bags. My mom [Annabelle Rama] and I share bags. My latest acquisition is an orange-colored YSL. I like it because of its Bohemian look."

SHOES

"I bought my favorite Dior high-heeled shoes in Los Angeles. I love it because of its unique style. I also like how my feet look in them. Even though I'm tall, I'm into sexy high heels, I guess because I've gotten used to wearing them. I don't have a lot of flats. If it's not four-inch of heels, I'd rather wear sneakers—nothing in between.

"I like wearing sneakers with cargo pants, jogging pants or with absolutely anything. Sneakers have to be a half-size bigger. Our feet expand in hot weather, so if you buy shoes in winter, you should buy a bigger one.

"Boots, for me, are the most comfortable. I wish it snowed in the Philippines so I could wear all my boots here. I wear my favorite pair, a YSL, with anything."

BOOKS

"I just finished reading 'The Da Vinci Code' and 'Angels and Demons.' My favorite author nowadays is Dan Brown.

"I also like 'The Purpose-Driven Life' because most of the stuff in it—how I should act and see things—is true. It helps me spiritually."

PERFUME

"My favorite perfume now is Creed Spring Flowers. Every time I use this every one says, 'You smell like *bagong ligo*!'

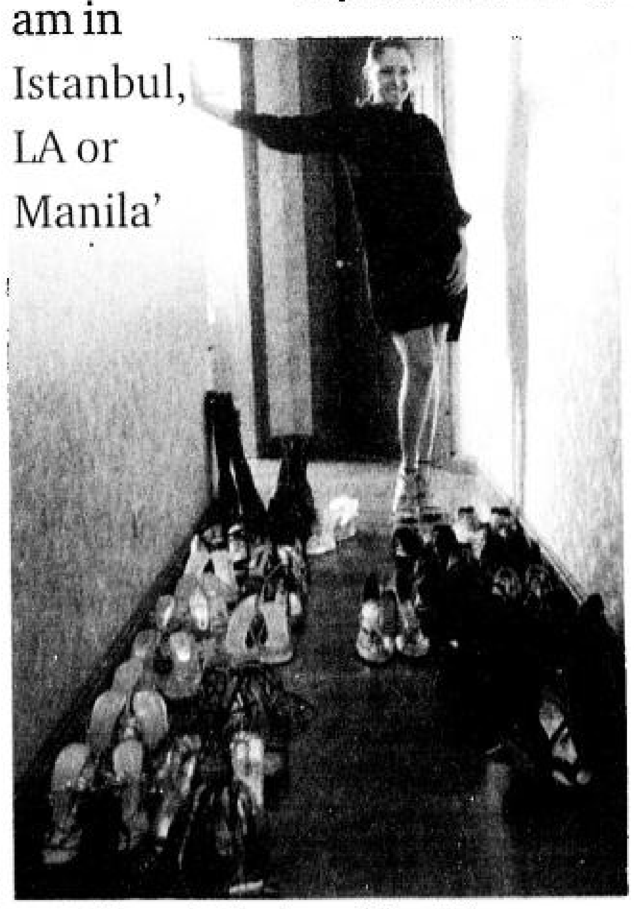
"I like the fresh smell of Lanvin Eclat, too. My bottle is almost empty."

HER YSL boots are her "most comfortable" pair.

TIE-DYED top covers unwanted fat, the kind that lingers after giving birth.

'What I wear depends on whether I am in Istanbul, LA or Manila'

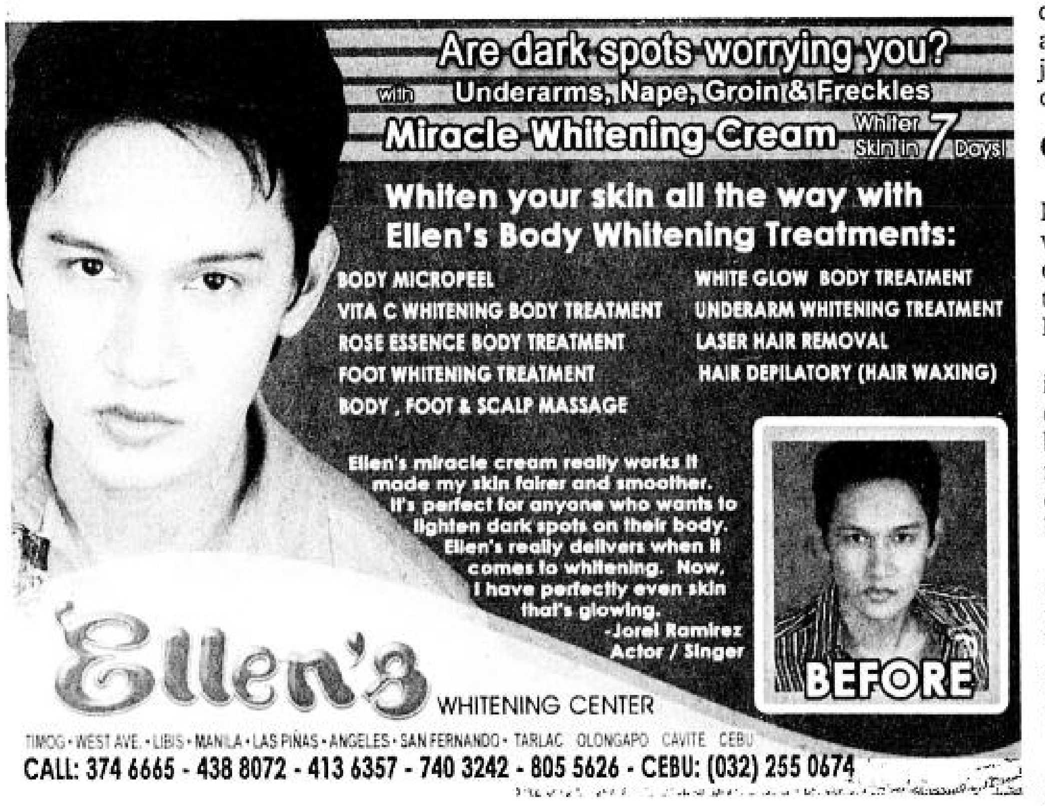
BLACK JERSEY TOP AND BLACK JERSEY BUBBLE SKIRT FROM IVAR ASERON. GRAY WOOL TOP AND TRENCH COAT FROM MARVI'S ROOM, MALATE, MANILA
MAKEUP BY JIGS MAYUGA OF SHU UEMURA
STYLING BY LIZ UY



"I'M INTO sexy high heels even if I'm tall."

MMM, FRESH! She wears Creed and Lanvin Eclat.

CARGO pants and tees Yilmaz approves of



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GRANDMA'S BOY R13 1:30,3:30,5:30,7:30,9:30	BASIC INSTINCT 2 R18 6:55pm,9:20pm	ICE AGE 2 G 11:30,1:30,3:30, 5:30,7:30,9:30

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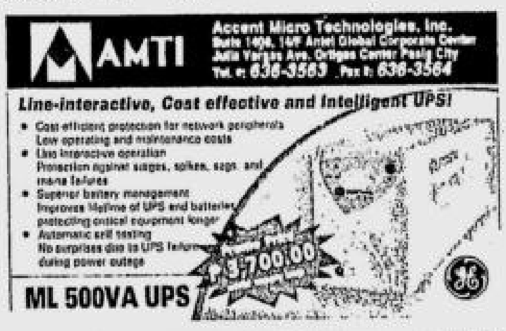

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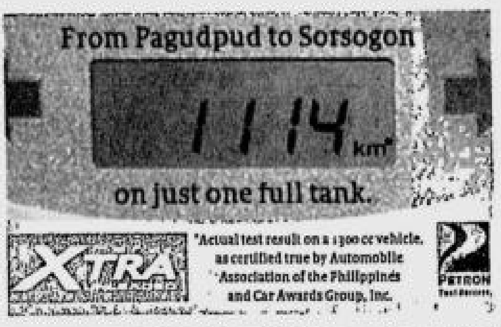

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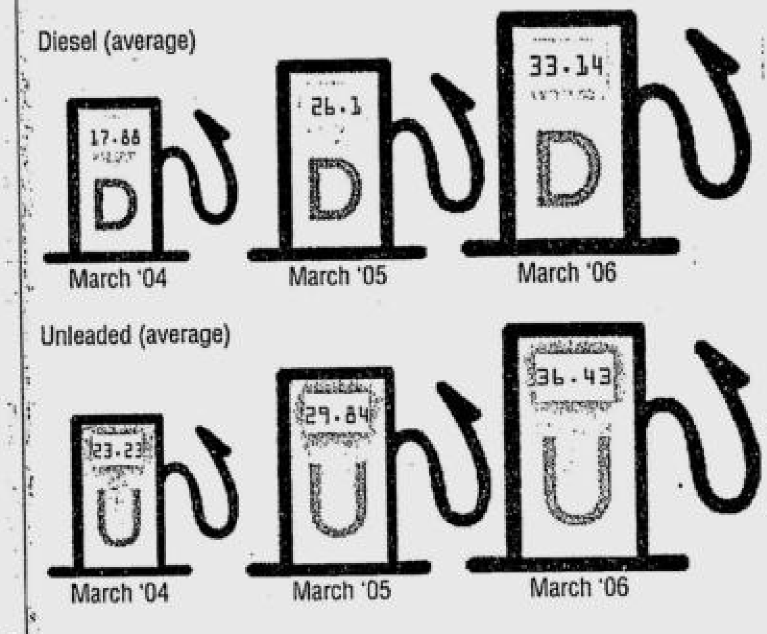
PETRON

March inflation inches up to 7.6%

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Fuel prices on the rise



Source: Department of Energy
Kate Pedroso PDI Research

As prices of utilities, food rise due to VAT rate hike

By Doris C. Dumlao

PRICES OF BASIC GOODS AND SERVICES ROSE BY AN AVERAGE 7.6 percent in March from a year earlier, or the same pace recorded in February.

The National Statistics Office said the cost of fuel, electricity and water rose after the government raised the value-added tax in February.

The March rate of 7.6 percent was at the top end of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' target of between 6.9 and 7.6 percent.

Core inflation, which excludes selected food and other volatile energy items, increased to 6.5 percent in March from 6.3 percent in February.

Inflation averaged 7.3 percent in the three months to March.

The inflation rate in Metro Manila rose 0.2 percentage point to 8.7 percent in March from 8.5 percent in February. Inflation in the provinces increased to 7.2 percent in March from 7.1 percent.

Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco said the inflation data along with a strong peso would give the monetary authority room to keep key interest rates unchanged at its policy meeting today.

"But we need to continue to watch possible risk factors including developments on the liquidity front with the sustained external surplus," he added.

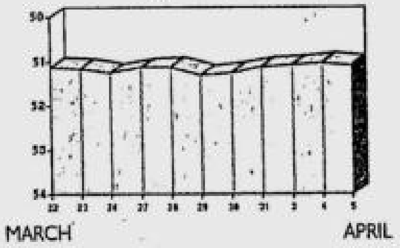
The peso climbed to a one-month high of 50.95 to the dollar Tuesday on the back of strong remittances from Filipinos living or working abroad. The local currency yesterday closed at 51.09 to the dollar, down from Tuesday's close of 51.045.

The Bangko Sentral left its benchmark

MARCH/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P51.09 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 5, 2006

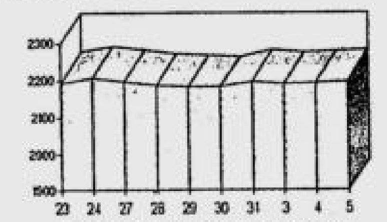
¥116.96 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 5, 2006

GOLD: $586.00-586.50

per ounce Hong Kong, April 4, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Globe cuts losses from cell site attacks

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE LOSSES OF GLOBE TELECOM INC. DUE to rebel attacks on its cellular phone network infrastructure have declined significantly over the last year, the company's president said.

In a briefing held the other day, Globe president and CEO Gerardo Ablaza said the company has coordinated closely with military and police authorities as well as beefed up its own security to guard against New People's Army attacks on its cell sites.

"We have been significantly more effective over the last 12 months," he said. "The number of attacks are down."

Globe has thus managed to cut down on expensive repairs or the acquisition of new equipment to replace those damaged by rebel attacks.

The company has a firm policy against paying so-called "revolutionary taxes" to the NPA, making them a target for periodic attacks. Every now and then, the rebel group attacks Globe's facilities, especially those located in remote locations, resulting in service disruptions.

Ablaza declined to disclose how much the company had lost due to NPA attacks, but said that the equipment and infrastructure for each cellular transmission tower costs about P10 million.

"The damage can be substantial," he said, adding that the impact of the attacks vary since some were successful while others were thwarted by the company's guards working with military or police personnel.

"There have been more than 50 attacks by

GLOBE/ B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

Car exports seen to slow down /B3

BOC collection target hiked /B8

Stocks up slightly in sluggish trade

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.17-percent higher yesterday on selective interest but trade was sluggish ahead of the Easter holiday break next week, dealers said.

They said they expected the market to trade in a narrow range with volumes thin

STOCKS/ B2

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Change top pick

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

I WAS ENJOYING THE NEWS ABOUT THE budget deficit, claiming this cute administration of Gloriaetta was able to trim it, but then I realized that, for this year, as a matter of fact, we do not have a budget yet.

How could this cute administration trim something that does not exist?

Well, I think we have to ask our senators and our congresspersons. They have to approve the national budget for 2006. Remember, boss, it's now April!

At the House of Representatives, for instance, Speaker Jose "Yoda" de Venecia set a March 30 deadline for the passage of the P1.03-TRILLION General Appropriations Act for 2006.

The date came and went, and we still do not have the budget.

Instead, our beloved lawmakers in the House tried their best to protect our "freedom" and "democracy" and all that.

They did it mainly by grilling the police and the military on their behavior during the recent crackdown of this cute administration against protests.

Now, please tell me if, thanks to the GRILLING of our brave congresspersons, the police or the military will no longer arrest protesters or file charges against them from now on.

Change topic, please! In fact, the business community now generally thinks that the crackdown actually succeeded—in favor of Gloriaetta, of course.

* * *

Over in the Senate, the 2006 budget of the Department of Agriculture is hanging.

Again, that's agriculture—meaning, it's about food.

The department is working on an additional P2.5-billion budget for this year for its antibird flu campaign.

For the sake of our action stars in the Senate, "bird flu" has nothing to do with any disease of their manly instruments.

It is a virus, and the agriculture department fears that it may affect our P180-billion poultry industry.

Based on a World Health Organization report, the "bird flu" is a potential pandemic, which means it can, realistically speaking, kill tens of millions of people worldwide.

Here in this country where 15 million (or roughly 20 percent) live in EXTREME poverty, even if the "bird flu" affects only the poultry industry, millions of us are as good as dead.

The agriculture department still does not have the additional budget because the senators were also in a GRILLING mood. They wanted to know the whereabouts of former Agriculture undersecretary Joc-joc Bolante, who apparently is the main figure in the so-called "fertilizer scam."

Unless the agriculture department can produce Bolante physically, it seems its antibird flu campaign will be put on hold. Heaven help us!

* * *

And so in the business community, the top pick for national issues is not the constitutional amendment being pushed by this cute administration.

One thought-provoking question is gaining ground: Is it perhaps good for us to shift to a unicameral system?

That, precisely, is the line of this cute administration of Gloriaetta in selling to us the Cha-cha. The administration line even goes on to claim that, under the parliamentary system, priority legislative measures will be passed in no time.

True or not, such a claim will only highlight the inadequacies of the present system. Sadly, the actuation of our lawmakers (or their lack of action) is working against them.

* * *

Word goes around that Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, the brother of Sen. Pia Cayetano, will investigate a case of "illegal land conversion" in Pampanga, which happens to be the home province of Gloriaetta.

I don't know if the rumors are only designed to tell us that, indeed, our lawmakers have nothing better to do. I just know that a real estate broker has been going around, talking about the plan of Cayetano

From what I gathered, the broker's name is Luisito Hipolito. In various news reports, he is said to be the "broker" in the real estate development project in Mexico town in Pampanga called Lakeshore Subdivision.

Owner of the subdivision is Central Country Estate Inc., or CCEI, which did the project in joint venture with Sta. Lucia Development.

It so happens that Hipolito is claiming "commission" from CCEI for brokering that deal with Sta. Lucia.

But CCEI claims that it had nothing to do with the "commission" claim of Hipolito, since Sta. Lucia should be the party to take care of it.

You can bet on it—in the aftermath of the claim and counterclaims, CCEI became the target of a series of media attacks, saying that the company violated land conversion rules, and that its stockholders were facing court cases for the violation.

CCEI said that it was all a lie.

Now where does Cayetano stand? I mean, is that the situation in which Cayetano wants to get himself embroiled? I thought I know him better than that.

March inflation . . .

From page B1

overnight interest rates unchanged for the fifth straight month in March, after raising them by a total of 75 basis points last year. The overnight borrowing rate stands at 7.50 percent and the overnight lending rate at 9.75 percent, their highest levels in four years.

The inflationary pressures in March continued to be tied largely to movements in prices of food and energy-related items, with food accounting for 3 percentage points of the 7.6 percent headline inflation rate.

Jose Vistan, an economist at AB Capital Securities, said it remained to be seen whether the inflation rate had peaked in the past two months given continuing pressures on the prices of oil, copper and energy.

He also noted that the spreads between US and Philippine interest rates were narrowing. Given that the US Federal Reserve was still likely to raise its key interest rate for two more consecutive meetings, the BSP may still be under pressure to tighten the country's monetary setting in the future.

Globe cuts losses . . .

From page B1

the NPA on our facilities since 2001," Ablaza said.

He said that the recent decline in rebel attacks on the company's cell sites was facilitated in part by Malacañang, which had instructed national and local authorities to prioritize the protection of these facilities.

"No less than President Arroyo had instructed then local government chief Angelo Reyes to help prevent these attacks," the Globe president said.

Ablaza spoke about the attacks in the context of the company's drive to cut costs amid expectations of weak revenue growth for the year.

During the briefing, he said that the telecommunications industry would likely experience single-digit revenue growth for the year due to leveling demand for existing mobile phone services.

Globe is the country's second-biggest telecommunications firm in terms of revenue and market share, trailing industry leader PLDT, which owns the Smart Communications Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp.

Ablaza said the company was now reexamining several of its marketing programs to determine which are effective.

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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
PURCHASE OF SERVICE VEHICLE

1. The *MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY (MIAA)*, through its ***2005 Corporate Fund*** intends to apply the sum of **Php 24,416,000.00** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the ***Purchase of Service Vehicles***. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The MIAA invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the ***Purchase of Service Vehicles***. Delivery of the goods shall be within ***sixty (60) calendar days*** after the receipt of the approved Contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from *Office of the Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee, MIAA* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from ***8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.***
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below on ***March 29 to April 12, 2006*** and upon payment of non-refundable fee in the amount of ***Php 11,200.00 (VAT Inclusive)***. The method of payment will be ***Cash or Manager's/Cashier's Check (payable to Manila International Airport Authority)***. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The *Bids and Awards Committee, MIAA* will hold a Pre-bid Conference open to all interested parties on ***April 21, 2006, 9:00 AM*** at ***Audio Visual Room, 4th floor, MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City.***
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before ***May 5, 2006, 9:00 AM.*** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of any of the following or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency:
   a. CASH, CERTIFIED CHECK, CASHIER'S CHECK, MANAGER'S CHECK, BANK DRAFT OR IRREVOCABLE LETTER OF CREDIT – one percent (1%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
   b. BANK GUARANTEE – one and a half percent (1 ½%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
   c. SURETY BOND – two and a half percent (2 ½%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract; callable on demand, issued by the GSIS or by any reputable private insurance company, provided, that it is accompanied by the company's valid certificate of accreditation issued by the Insurance Commission (for private insurance company) and official receipt of payment of premium (GSIS and private insurance company).

   Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on ***May 5, 2006, 9:30 AM*** at the ***Audio Visual Room, 4th floor, MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City.*** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative who choose to attend at the stated address.
9. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.
10. The ***MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY*** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bids and Awards Committee
Joanne G. La Madrid
4th floor, MIAA Administration Bldg., MIA Road Pasay City
Trunkline: (02) 877-1109 loc. 3795
Fax No.: (02) 877-1801

(Sgd.) **ATTY. OSCAR L. PARAS, JR.**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI—March 30 & April 6, 2006)

Stocks up slightly . . .

From page B1

ahead of public holidays on Thursday and Friday of next week.

The composite index rose 3.70 points at 2,197.90 after trading between 2,187.22 and 2,200.45. Volume was 1.96 billion shares worth P970.36 million.

The broader all-shares index gained 4.72 points at 1,078.72.

Gainers led losers 69 to 26, with 54 stocks unchanged.

Nestor Aguila at DA Market Securities said the market remained in a consolidation phase, trading in a narrow range.

"Buying interest in blue chips has been selective while we've seen strong interest in other stocks, particularly in the mining sector," Aguila added.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was top-traded, ending unchanged at P1,935.

Rival Globe Telecom advanced P15 to P885 after a company executive said it expected further foreign exchange gains to boost 2006 profits.

Ayala Corp. fell P5 to P352.50 while Ayala Land retreated 25 centavos to P11.25. Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) was steady at P62.

San Miguel A-shares were steady at P60.50 while its B-shares rose a peso to P80. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 5, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.8	175,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35.5	35	35.5	200,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62	62	61.5	62	752,900
China Banking Corp.	705	715	705	715	1,350
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.46	0.48	0.46	0.46	3,290,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	72.5	74	72	73	197,500
International Exch. Bank	32.5	33	32.5	33	26,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38	38.5	38	38	161,800
Philippine National Bank	33	33.5	33	33	5,100
Phil. Savings Bank	40	40	40	40	2,500
Philippine Trust Co.	42	42	42	42	7,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	52,100
Security Bank Corp.	43.5	45.5	43.5	45.5	432,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	36	39	36	39	135,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	2,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.99	1	0.99	1	633,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	175	175	175	175	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2150	2150	2150	2150	290
Ivantage Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.02	1.02	16,327,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44	44	44	44	787,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	46	46	45	45.5	425,000
Manila Electric Co. A	14	14.5	14	14.5	66,900
Manila Electric Co. B	21.25	21.25	20.75	21.25	417,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.4	2,577,000
Petron Corp.	4.3	4.35	4.25	4.3	1,770,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	200,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.65	65,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3	3	3	3	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	19	19	19	19	45,900
Jollibee Foods Corp.	37	37	36	36	932,900
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	16	16	16	16	404,900
Pancake House Inc.	4.05	4.05	4.05	4.05	6,000
RFM Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	10,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	311,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	40,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60.5	60	60.5	124,400
San Miguel Corp. B	79.5	80	79.5	80	131,400
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	5,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.75	18	17.75	18	223,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	110,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.46	1.52	1.46	1.5	4,760,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.15	4.2	4.15	4.2	436,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	30,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	9,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources, Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	2,000,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.42	0.47	0.42	0.47	260,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	17,000,000
Ayala Corp.	357.5	360	352.5	352.5	95,300
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	1,185,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022	20,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	181,000
APC Group Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	2,840,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	6,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.86	0.87	0.86	0.87	350,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.02	1	1	2,251,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.45	3.5	3.45	3.45	1,874,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	596,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.36	609,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	5.8	6.1	5.8	6.1	2,102,000
Medco Holdings	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	100,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	1,900,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.55	0.56	0.55	0.56	400,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	3,020,000
SM Investments Corp.	227	230	226	229	75,170
South China Resources Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	30,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	500,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.12	1,020,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.25	633,600
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	20,000
Belle Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	4,637,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	800,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	50,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.205	1,600,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.65	0.66	0.64	0.66	30,570,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.025	0.028	0.025	0.026	1,700,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.66	0.68	0.66	0.68	300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	2,397,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	3.1	3.6	3.05	3.5	1,922,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.48	1.54	1.48	1.54	29,214,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.29	31,040,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	3,650,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	7.9	8.1	7.9	8.1	442,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	480,000
SM Development Corp.	1.56	1.58	1.56	1.58	162,000
Sm Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.8	787,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	5,090,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12	12	12	12	800
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.98	0.99	0.97	0.99	4,820,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	870	885	870	885	30,740
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3	3.05	2.95	3.05	6,280,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1930	1935	1930	1935	102,500
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	1,850,000
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	2,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	127,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.0525	0.049	0.05	7,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.14	1.12	1.12	125,000
Philweb Corp.	0.023	0.024	0.022	0.024	113,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.46	2.48	2.46	2.48	730,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	379,800
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.97	1	0.97	0.97	1,340,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	10,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,000,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.74	1,380,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	180,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.47	0.48	0.46	0.46	780,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	430,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Jardine Davies Inc.	23	23	23	23	500
Macroasia Corp.	1.9	1.92	1.84	1.86	590,000
Paxys Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.2	9.2	264,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.38	1.48	1.34	1.46	6,916,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.5	1.54	1.48	1.5	1,583,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	179,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	1,461,000
Benguet Corp. A	8	8.5	8	8.5	80,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.26	0.23	0.25	108,350,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.27	0.32	0.27	0.31	57,850,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	374,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	139,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	343,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	2.95	3.05	2.9	2.95	10,376,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.95	3.05	2.9	3	19,989,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26	26	26	26	697,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.32	0.35	0.32	0.35	5,590,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.34	0.38	0.34	0.36	4,860,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1,020,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	303,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	44,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	170,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	100,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	5,000
PREFERRED					
DMCI Holdings, Inc- Pref.	1400	1400	1400	1400	600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series G	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	700
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	2,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	11,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	11	11	10.75	10.75	19,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	11	11	10.75	10.75	7,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	5,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	11	11	11	11	18,800
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Cc	10.5	11	10.5	11	1,300
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	12	12	12	12	50,600

CURRENCIES

United States	Dollar	0.815594	1.000000	51.0020
Japan	Yen	0.006944	0.008514	0.4342
United Kingdom	Pound	1.432346	1.756200	89.5697
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.105117	0.128884	6.5733
Switzerland	Franc	0.632146	0.775074	39.5303
Canada	Dollar	0.701828	0.860511	43.8878
Singapore	Dollar	0.506990	0.621620	31.7039
Australia	Dollar	0.587816	0.720721	36.7582
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.164183	2.653505	135.3341
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.217474	0.266645	13.5994
Brunei	Dollar	0.505419	0.619694	31.6056
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000111	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.021187	0.025977	1.3249
UAE	Dirham	0.222063	0.272272	13.8864
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.226100	62.5336
Argentina	Peso	0.264803	0.324675	16.5591
Brazil	Real	0.383178	0.469814	23.9615
Denmark	Kroner	0.133996	0.164293	8.3793
India	Rupee	0.018295	0.022432	1.1441
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.221749	0.271887	13.8668
Mexico	New Peso	0.074644	0.091521	4.6678
New Zealand	Dollar	0.496859	0.609199	31.0704
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013582	0.016653	0.8493
South Africa	Rand	0.135368	0.165975	8.4651
Korea	Won	0.000848	0.001040	0.0530
Sweden	Kroner	0.106708	0.130835	6.6728
Syria	Pound	0.015712	0.019264	0.9825
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025134	0.030817	1.5717

Asian Spirit resumes flights to Antique

By Daxim L. Lucas

LOCAL CARRIER ASIAN SPIRIT will resume its flights to Antique from Manila starting tomorrow "due to the public's insistent demand," the airline said in a statement.

The April 7 resumption of the service comes less than a week after the airline inaugurated its first international flight to the Pacific resort island of Palau.

"As a response to the clamor of Antiqueños and nearby municipalities alike, Asian Spirit will resume and maintain regular flights to Antique from Manila and vice versa three times weekly every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday," Asian Spirit executive vice president Jack Po said.

Asian Spirit cancelled its flights to Antique earlier this year due to losses and poor passenger traffic which made its jet service to the island unprofitable.

This time around, the airline will use the 70-seater British Aerospace Advanced Turboprop (ATP) manufactured by British Aerospace Systems to service the route.

It also said that the public's clamor for the resumption of flights was boosted by the offices of Congressman Ezequiel Javier, Governor Salvacion Perez as well as local government units which were among those who requested Asian Spirit to resume flights to Antique.

The Wednesday Antique flight departs Manila at 9:15 in the morning and leaves Antique at 10:50 a.m. while the Friday and Sunday flights leave Manila at 3:30 in the afternoon and leaves Antique at 5 p.m.

"The resumption flight to Antique is in time with the upcoming Binirayan Festival this April and is within the airline's thrust to provide air services to both missionary and major airports," Po added.

Car exports seen to slow down

Asia-wide slump affects RP vehicle trade

FROM Thailand to Indonesia, car markets are experiencing a slump in sales, according to Ford Group Philippines, the country's sole exporter of completely built vehicles.

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE COUNTRY'S ONLY EXPORTER OF COMPLETELY built vehicles yesterday said it expected minimal growth of export volumes this year amid the reported slowdown in its markets across Asia.

Henry T. Co, president of Ford Group Philippines, said that this year's outbound cargo may not grow at all or, at best, may only increase by 3.7 percent.

"It could be equal to last year's 13,500 units but, hopefully, it might reach 14,000 units," Co said.

The company, which also owns the Mazda brand, assembles the Ford Escape, Ford Focus, Mazda 3 and Mazda Tribute, in its facility in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The vehicles are shipped out to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

"Sales are tempered in Thailand and first-quarter performance in Indonesia is not good," Co said. "The same is happening in Vietnam because of new taxes on automobiles, while Malaysian buyers have financing problems because of defaults on auto loans."

Ford Motor Co. Philippines is the only participant in the government's automotive export program. When it started in 2002, it shipped out about 2,800 units.

To date, the company has sold a total of at least 40,000 units throughout Southeast Asia.

Also, Co said the firm hoped to increase vehicle sales by 9 percent this year, which would be higher than the 8.6 percent and 8.3 percent achieved in the past two years.

"But this would depend largely on the implementation of a Supreme Court decision that imported used vehicles are not allowed to enter Philippine territory outside the Subic freeport," he said.

The official said the company would roll out two or three new models in the second half of the year.

Aside from that, the Ford group is gearing up to introduce vehicles that can run on gasoline blended with 20-percent ethanol.

Company officials earlier announced a layout of P1.1 billion to enable the Sta. Rosa plant to manufacture so-called flex fuel engines or those than can run on either pure or blended gasoline.

They said the Sta. Rosa facility would turn out 100,000 units of flex-fuel engines over the next five years valued at about $100 million.

About 80 percent of the output would be for export to the region.

DOE sends out 'invites' for Malampaya oil bid

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ACTUAL DEVELOPMENT work on the oil leg of the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project may take place before the end of the year as the Philippine National Oil Co. opens the selection process for the third-party participant in the project.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said that PNOC has already sent out "invitation letters" for interested entities, who have until April 17 to submit their proposals for the development of the Malampaya oil rim.

PNOC will be evaluating the proposals and issue its decision on June 2, Lotilla said.

Although Malampaya consortium members Shell Philippines Exploration BV (Spex) and Chevron Malampaya LLC, have a say on the oil rim development protocol—by virtue of a tripartite agreement with PNOC and the Department of Energy—it would only be the DOE and PNOC that would decide on the third-party participant, he said.

After making its decision, PNOC will have six months, or up to September, to finalize its agreement with the new partner, Lotilla said.

The DOE, PNOC and the Malampaya consortium inked a tripartite agreement that aimed to ensure the development of the oil rim would not endanger the Malampaya gas reservoir.

To ensure protection of the gas find, the agreement specifies a "production and operating zone" for activities to be carried out under the terms of service for the oil leg.

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Banana chips—not your typical sagging industry

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

WHEN ONE THINKS OF PHILIPPINE FRUIT exports, what usually comes to mind are Cavendish bananas, pineapples and mangoes grown in huge plantations by large multinational companies.

Nobody realizes that banana chips from cardaba or saba banana, has become one of the country's emerging export winners.

Yes, that's right. Banana chips from "lowly" cardaba or saba, which is sold mostly in local wet markets and traditionally served as *nilagang saging* or banana cue, are now invading major markets worldwide as a healthy snack food.

The banana chip industry is a thriving industry in the country, particularly in Mindanao.

Last year, total banana chip exports jumped to about $35 million, up almost 70 percent just three years ago.

There are about 25 banana chip factories operating in the country, the majority of them located in Davao, Sosksargen, Caraga and northern Mindanao.

Processing and export of banana chips started in the early '80s when a number of enterprising businessmen in Luzon rode on the popularity of processed tropical fruits in foreign markets.

But the factories in Luzon encountered problems as the island is regularly battered by typhoons, frequently disrupting the supply of raw materials for processing.

Meanwhile, a few adventurous entrepreneurs set up chipping operations in Mindanao and found the southern island a more reliable supplier of cardaba banana due to its typhoon-free climate and more productive soil.

Soon, Mindanao-based processors were outperforming their Luzon counterparts due to more consistent raw material supply, lower production costs and higher operating efficiencies.

Thus, more and more processors were forced to relocate to Mindanao in the '90s, making the island the seat of the country's banana chip industry.

Since then, the local banana chip business has been dramatically transformed into a multimillion, highly competitive and export-oriented industry.

Philippine banana chips are now being sold in almost all major markets worldwide—the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, France, Germany, Britain and Australia.

Recently, Philippine banana chips have become a big hit in China where total exports tripled in the last three years.

Even with this generally positive market outlook, the local banana chip industry is not without problems.

One major threat to the rapid growth of the industry is increasing production cost, which started to bear its ugly effects late last year through higher power rates, more expensive raw materials particularly cooking oil and sugar, increasing wages and skyrocketing freight rates.

Competition from other suppliers like Vietnam and Thailand in key export markets like China is also intensifying.

In more established markets like the US and the European Union, quality and food safety standards and other non-tariff barriers are becoming increasingly stringent.

Raw material availability is also becoming erratic as more Mindanao growers shift from cardaba farming to other more lucrative crops like Cavendish banana, lakatan banana, pineapple and other fruit trees.

In the midst of these seemingly overwhelming challenges, the local banana chip industry has been shaken but has remained undaunted.

In fact, these difficulties have forced all major stakeholders to work together to deal squarely with the industry's most urgent issues.

Collaborating closely with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and support institutions like the US-government funded Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program, the local banana chip industry has embarked on a number of initiatives that seek to enhance its competitive position in the world market.

(Joji Ilagan Bian is a strong advocate for Mindanao; chair, Mindanaworld Foundation Inc.; ConCom and Charter Change Advocacy Commission member; vice chair of the Mindanao Commission Of Women and National Corn Board; chair of the Mindanao TVET; Mindanao Rep, Export Development Council; chair, Joji Ilagan Foundation; former chair of the Mindanao Business Council. Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

Entrepreneurs Get Financial and Telco Muscle

PLDT and Plantersbank launch SME Initiatives

The recent alliance formed between PLDT and Planters Development Bank resolves to strengthen the presence of Philippine SMEs on the map of the global community. By closing the deal, these two corporations will be opening the doors to a multitude of opportunities for numerous business owners in the country.

Enthused by the collaboration, Eric R. Alberto, SVP and Head of PLDT Corporate Business Group says, "We're very delighted to be teaming our telecommunications expertise with Plantersbank's financial know-how". He elaborates by saying, "This marks the beginning of our partnership with one of the country's recognized leaders in Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) banking".

For over 40 years, Plantersbank has focused on providing SME-oriented products and services, one of which is the SME Proposition Package, a suite of cash management, financial services and technology solutions designed to assist SME clients in managing their daily business operations. Now, just when their clients thought their deal couldn't get any sweeter, Plantersbank has decided to team up with PLDT.

The other component of this ground-breaking cooperation is PLDT BizDSL. With this partnership, Plantersbank's SME depositors may enjoy free broadband DSL Internet. The result is limitless possibilities for entrepreneurs to further expand their businesses and reach a much broader spectrum of clientele.

"I take pride in this joint venture, which further reflects Plantersbank's deeper understanding of the country's SMEs. Our partnership with PLDT will prove to be a great benefit to this sector. We will now be able to equip them with technology that will take them right to the future", says Plantersbank EVP and Branch Banking Group Head, Roberto A. Buhain.

"It's about time that businessmen in our country start competing actively in the global arena", says Adonis C. Yap, General Manager of PDB SME Solutions Inc., "Why should they limit themselves to local transactions when the rest of the world is waiting on the Internet? Together with PLDT, we are giving them the opportunity to make their mark."

This collaboration allows a Plantersbank SME client to avail of the SME Proposition package, which includes free BizDSL, by simply maintaining a required daily balance. The package includes Plantersbank's Cash Management Services such as check writing facility, 250 pieces of continuous checks, a directory listing on the website www.sme.com.ph, plus free BizDSL from 6 months up to 2 years.

PLDT also signed the PLDT DSL Internet Reseller Marketing Agreement with Plantersbank's subsidiary, PDB SME Solutions, Inc., appointing the latter as a channel partner and authorizing it to promote and procure the sale of PLDT BizDSL Internet Services.

"In this modern day and age, Filipino businessmen need to be able to utilize a particular technology, like BizDSL, in order to maintain a responsive and globally competitive business", adds Nerissa S. Ramos, FVP and Head of PLDT Corporate Business Solutions.

In agreement, Eric Alberto says, "With the advent of globalization, it is imperative for our SMEs to fit into that market. As Filipinos, we have to make the owners of SMEs known to the world. In order to do this, they have to be e-enabled."

It seems they're already halfway there.

Visit your Plantersbank branch now or check www.plantersbank.com.ph for more information.

Telco expertise combined with financial know-how for SME benefits

PLDT FVP Cesar Enriquez (right) welcomes Plantersbank EVP & Branch Banking Group Head Roberto Buhain along with PLDT SVP Eric Alberto.

CONTRACT SIGNING

PLDT SVP for the Corporate Business Group, Eric R. Alberto with Plantersbank EVP & Branch Banking Group Head Roberto Buhain

Ayala bullish on retail prospects, to invest ₱4B

Tri Noma in Quezon City, Greenbelt 5, Piazza Serendra on list of major projects

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA LAND INC. PLANS TO SPEND P4 BILLION on five retail projects, officials said following the company's annual stockholders' meeting yesterday.

One of its projects is "Tri Noma" (Triangle North of Makati) in Quezon City.

Tri Noma at the North Triangle Depot covers 200,000 square meters and is scheduled for opening by mid-2007.

Greenbelt 5—which covers 31,250 square meters of leasable space—is expected to begin operations by the second quarter of 2008.

Greenbelt 5 will follow on the success of Greenbelt 4 and will house world-class luxury brands showcasing Filipino designers.

Officials also said ALI would launch Piazza Serendra in Bonifacio Global City before the end of the year.

The 6,000-square-meter area will house special outlets with varying themes, such as Oriental or Spanish Filipino food, furniture and groceries.

The property arm of the Ayala group is also building an interactive park with spaces for retail outlets in Fort Bonifacio Global City, near Market! Market! and the Adidas sports camp.

Outside of Manila, Ayala Land is also expanding Ayala Center Cebu, adding 13,500 square meters to the mall.

These retail projects will increase ALI's gross leasable space by 323,000 square meters by 2008, officials said.

ALI earlier said it was setting aside P16 billion this year for its projects, more than double actual project expenses in 2005.

The bulk or P9.1 billion of capital expenditure would go to leisure and residential projects by Ayala Land Premiere, Community Innovations and its affordable housing arm, Avida Land.

Shopping malls will use up 26 percent of the budget or roughly P4.1 billion, while the rest of the budget will be distributed as follows : P1.2 billion for corporate business that includes buildings for business process outsourcing (BPO), P800 million for leisure and residential projects in the Visayas and Mindanao and close to P900 million for land banking.

ALI president Jaime Ayala, meanwhile, said the company would continue selling non-core property assets.

He said ALI was looking to sell 400 hectares of land from its land bank but did not identify these properties.

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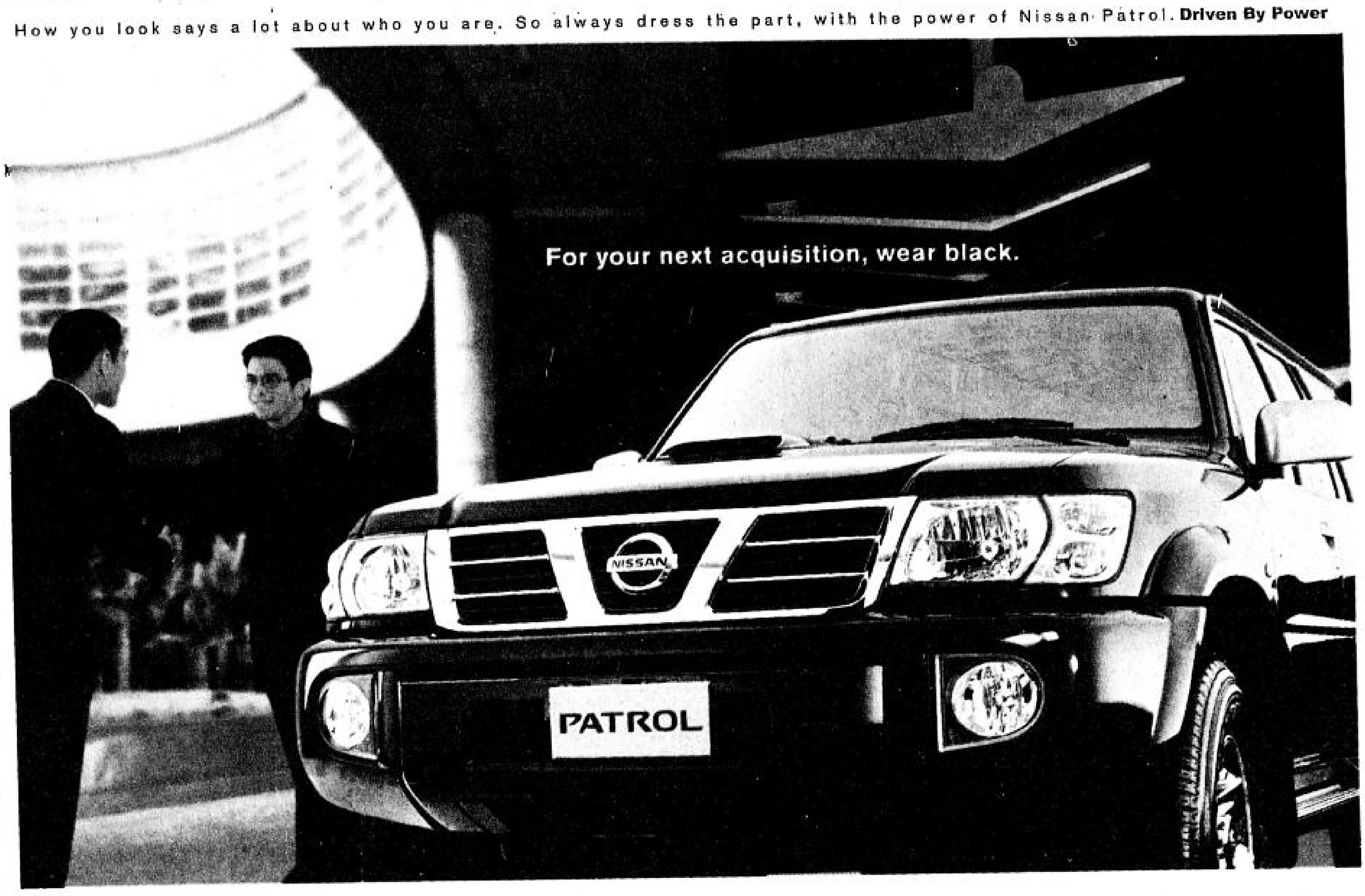

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BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE-INFRASTRUCTURE
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Province of Cebu, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Infrastructure (BAC-INFRA), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	:	Proposed Construction of Daanbantayan Roro Port
Location	:	Maya, Daanbantayan, Cebu
Brief Description	:	Construction of Roll-On-Roll-Off Port
Approved Budget for the Contract	:	P14,999,598.45
Contract Duration	:	180 Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC-INFRA will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the in Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC-INFRA will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statements and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of BAC-INFRA activities is as follows:

BAC-INFRA Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	March 30 - April 6, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	March 30 - April 6, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	March 30 - April 6, 2006
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	April 7, 2006
5. Issuance of Bidding Documents	April 10, 2006
6. Pre-bid Conference	April 12, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	April 25, 2006

The BAC-INFRA Secretariat will issue to prospective bidder's Eligibility Forms at the Provincial Engineer's Office, Legislative Building, Capitol Compound, Cebu City, upon their submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of non-refundabe amount of Fifty Pesos (P50.00) to the Cash Division, Provincial Treasurer's Office. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to, and may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check from the aforementioned address. For further inquiries, one may call the Secretariat at (032) 416-5400 local 110.

The BAC-INFRA will issue Bidding Documents including Plans and Specifications only to bidders declared by the BAC-INFRA to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) to the Cash Division, Provincial Treasurer's Office.

The Province of Cebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids and reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not to award the contract.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO T. HABIN**
Chairman

(PDI - March 30 & April 6, 2006)

TransCo
Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation

Section I. Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of Single Cell Stationary Batteries

(Reference No.: PB060228-EL0025)

1. The *NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO)* through the CY2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board intends to apply the sum of *Php 7,200,000.00* being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of Stationary Single Cell Batteries.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for *Stationary Batteries.* Delivery of the GOODS is required *within ninety (90) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order.* The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders, starting **March 30, 2006 to May 8, 2006 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.** at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of *One Thousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00).* The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **April 24, 2006 at 2:00 P.M.** at the same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **2:00 P.M. of May 9, 2006.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount:

Form of Security	Amount
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)	PhP 72,000.00
2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC)	PhP 108,000.00
3. Surety bond (2.5% of ABC)	PhP 180,000.00
4. Foreign government guarantee (100% of ABC)	PhP 7,200,000.00

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted

7. Bid opening shall be on **May 9, 2006 / 2:00 P.M.** at the *Admin Conference Rm. same address below.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (632) 9812235 / Fax No. (632) 9228432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) **ARMANDO N. OCHOA**
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI – March 30 & April 6, 2006)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project

Name of Project/Brief Description	One (1) lot supply, delivery and commissioning of one (1) unit Banknote Disc Counting Machine with table stand per BSP specifications
Approved Budget for the Contract	P 2,000,000.00
Delivery Period	Within thirteen (13) weeks after receipt of Letter of Credit (L/C)

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project with the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/ fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	31 March to 21 April 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	21 April 2006; 2:00 P.M.
3. Opening of Bids	09 May 2006; 2:00 P.M.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P1,000.00** to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI – April 6, 2006)

BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol
Fax No. (038) 508-8095, Tel. No. (038) 508-0084, 508-0085

INVITATION FOR BIDS NO. 2006-01

The **BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (BOHECO-I)** thru 5% reinvestment and general fund intends to procure various electrical materials and equipments to be used in our coverage area.

Sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the above-mentioned materials will be received by **BOHECO-I** at its main office in Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol on or before April 20, 2006 at 2:30 P.M. at which time and place said proposal would be opened and read in the presence of bidders or their representatives.

The interested bidders may obtain information, secure list of bidding documents from **BOHECO-I** Main Office upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Pesos (Php1,680.00).

(Sgd.) **CARLOS B. ITABLE**
General Manager

(PDI–April 6, 2006)

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Direct Line: 636-65-43 / Telefax: 636-65-42, 633-93-43 Trunk Line: 632-13-61 Locals: 2085/2115

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DepED-Bids and Awards Committee (DepED-BAC) invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for Supply and Delivery of the following:

Package	Items	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Pre-Bid Conference	Bid Submission deadline/ Opening of Bids	Venue	End user
A	Dental Anesthetics 55,000 carpules	Php 1,360,000.00	April 21, 2006 2:00 p.m.	May 4, 2006 2:00 p.m.	Bulwagan ng Karunungan DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City	Health and Nutrition Center (HNC)
B	Dental Needles 150,000 pieces					
C	Sodium Flouride (NaFl) Powder 4,800 kgs	Php 600,000.00				
	Total	Php 1,960,000.00				

Bids received that exceed the ABC per Package shall be rejected.

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Service, Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting **April 6, 2006** upon payment of the non-refundable fee of **PhP2,000.00** in cash to the DepED Cashier.

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at **http://www.deped.gov.ph** or **www.procurementservice.org** or call DepED-PS at telephone no. 636-65-43 or fax no. 636-65-42.

DepED-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, or declare failure of bidding at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected parties.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA**
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson, BAC

(PDI–April 6 & 12, 2006)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepED

PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 507-508, 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph, e-mail: deped_procurement@yahoo.com.ph
Direct Line: 636-65-43 / Telefax: 636-65-42, 633-93-43 Trunk Line: 632-13-61 Locals: 2085/2115

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DepED-Bids and Awards Committee (DepED-BAC) invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for Supply and Delivery of the following:

Package	Item	Items	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Pre-Bid Conference	Bid Submission deadline/ Opening of Bids	Venue	End user
A	1	Albendazole Tablets (1,000,000 Tablets)	Php5,900,000.00	April 21, 2006 3:00 p.m.	May 04, 2006 3:00 p.m.	Bulwagan ng Karunungan DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City	Health and Nutrition Center (HNC)
B	1	Aneroid Sphygmomanometer (500 pieces)	Php1,330,000.00				
	2	Mercurial Sphygmomanometer (150 pieces)					
	3	Stethoscopes (650 pieces)					
		TOTAL	Php7,230,000.00				

Bids received that exceed the ABC per package shall be rejected.

The Bidding Documents shall be available in compact disk or hard copy at the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Service, Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting on April 6, 2006 upon payment of the non-refundable fee of **PhP 2,000.00** in cash to the DepED Cashier.

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at http://www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.org or call DepED-PS at telephone no. 636-65-43 or fax no 636-65-42

DepED-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, or declare failure of bidding at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected parties.

(Sgd) **ATTY. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA**
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson, BAC

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OBITUARIES

SO LOVINGLY REMEMBERED

On his

TWENTY-FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

ANTONIO G. DULALIA

who joined his Creator on April 7, 1984

Masses will be offered tomorrow, April 7, Friday, at the following churches:

Mount Carmel Shrine, Doña Juana Rod., Q.C.	6:00 a.m.
Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows Ave., Pasig	7:00 a.m.
St. James Parish, Ayala Alabang Vill., Muntinlupa	7:00 a.m.
St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish, Magallanes Village	7:00 a.m.
Espiritu Santo Church, Tayuman St., Manila	7:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Kanlaon St., Q.C.	7:30 a.m.
Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon Ave., Q.C.	8:00 a.m.
Quiapo Church of the Black Nazarene, Quiapo, Manila	8:00 a.m.
Sta. Cruz Church, Sta. Cruz, Manila	5:30 p.m.
Mary the Queen Parish, Greenhills, San Juan	6:00 p.m.
Sanctuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan	6:15 p.m.
Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati	6:15 p.m.

Relatives, friends, and pious readers are requested to remember him in their prayers.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
(2 Timothy 4)

DEATH NOTICE

GAUDENCIO FERRER RAMOS
Peacefully joined his Creator on April 1, 2006 at the age of 80.

His body lies in state at Arlington, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at Himlayang Pilipino, 9:00 a.m. today, April 6, 2006.

More Classified Ads on page B2

CNCHS to hold reunion

THE CABATUAN NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE HIGH School in Cabatuan, Iloilo will hold its 9th General Alumni Homecoming on April 16, 2006.

The grand reunion will be opened by a Thanksgiving Mass at 6:30am it will be followed by a parade from the Roman Catholic Church to Cabatuan National Comprehensive High School. A short opening program will be held at the new gym of the school. The socialization of each class will be done in an assigned classroom.

At 7:00 pm, the Homecoming Ball will start in the covered gym in the town plaza. The Highlight of the General alumni Homecoming will be a closing program at 11:00pm. During the program, the new set of officers of Cabatuan National Comprehensive High School Alumni Association will be inducted to office. The program will be highlighted by the coronation of Alumni Muse 2006.

All alumni of CNCHS are invited to attend the 9th General alumni Homecoming.

For more details, please contact your class coordinator.

QCHS Grand Alumni Homecoming

THE QUEZON CITY HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI Association, Inc. will hold its 15th General Assembly and Grand Alumni Homecoming on April 9, 2006 at the school campus. It is hosted by Batch '81 with Batch '66 as co-host.

This year's honorees are the Silver Jubilarians, Batch '81; the Pearl Jubilarians, Batch '76; the Ruby Jubilarians, Batch '66, and the Golden Jubilarians, Batch '56.

Registration starts at 2:00 p.m. Motiff is South Pacific.

For more details, please contact: Cel Cuvin, '81, 0917-622-7246; Divina Paz C. Sacramento, '66, 825-0127, 826-3196; Tita Peñaranda Montinola, '56, 922-7087; and Art Dialogo, Secretary, 416-4898.

CGEAHS Batch '85 reunion

CALLING ALL CAMP GENERAL EMILIO AGUINALDO High School (CGEAHS) Batch 1985. Reunion scheduled this December 2006. Please coordinate with Ms. Girly Tabor 0916-2690955 or Mr. Carlos Barlisan 0918-6530404

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ANTONIO MADRIGAL y PATERNO

Encomendó su alma al Creador
el dia 4 de Abril, 2006
después de recebir los santos sacramentos.

Su deconcolada esposa, **Amanda Abad Santos**; sus hijos **Ma. Susana** y **Jose Armando**, **Ma. Ana Consuelo** y **Eric**, **Ma. Rosa** y **Richard**; sus nietas **Alexandra**, **Michaela** y **Serena**; sus hermanos **Jose†** y **Victoria†**, **Macaria†**, **Pacita**, **Josefina†**, **Consuelo** y **Manuel**, **Maria Luisa** y **Daniel**; sus sobrinos y sobrinas, y otros parientes reugan una oración para el eterno descanso de su alma.

El féretro se halla en LIWANAG 145 10th Street, New Manila, Quezon City.

El entierro tendrá lugar el Sábado, 8 de Abril, en el Mausoleo Madrigal-Paterno, Alabang, después de la Santa Misa, a las once de la mañana, en la Iglesia de Santo Domingo, Quezon City.

ANTONIO MADRIGAL y PATERNO

Passed into the light of our Lord
on 4 April 2006

His bereaved wife, **Amanda Abad Santos**; children **Ma. Susana** and **Jose Armando**, **Ma. Ana Consuelo** and **Eric**, **Ma. Rosa** and **Richard**; grandchildren **Alexandra**, **Michaela** and **Serena**; brothers and sisters **Jose†** and **Victoria†**, **Macaria†**, **Pacita**, **Josefina†**, **Consuelo** and **Manuel**, **Maria Luisa** and **Daniel**; and relatives, request friends and readers to join in prayer for his soul's eternal peace.

His body lies in state at LIWANAG 145 10th Street, New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be at the family mausoleum at Alabang, following the 11:00 a.m. Requiem Mass on Saturday, 8 April, at Santo Domingo Church, Quezon City.

The Board of Directors,
Officers and Staff of

A.P. Madrigal Steamship Co., Inc.

deeply mourn the loss of their founding President and Chairman

DON ANTONIO MADRIGAL y PATERNO

on 4 April 2006

The Board of Directors,
Officers and Staff of

MADRIGAL PACIFIC CARRIERS

deeply mourn the loss of their Chairman Emeritus

DON ANTONIO MADRIGAL y PATERNO

on 4 April 2006

BOC collection target hiked

Customs bureau now expected to collect ₱196B in '06

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTER-AGENCY DEVELOPMENT Budget Coordination Committee has jacked up the Bureau of Customs' collection target for this year by P5.5 billion, while raising the government's expenditure ceiling by the same amount to accommodate some tax subsidies.

This developed as the BOC announced that it has exceeded its monthly collection target for March, citing an initial collection of P16.71 billion or a 17.2-percent surplus from its P14.26 billion target for the period.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, who aso chairs the DBCC, yesterday said in a press statement that the government body has approved the quarterly deficit goals for the year, pegging the first quarter's deficit ceiling at P71.8 billion.

According to the deficit schedule approved by the DBCC, a cumulative deficit ceiling of P90.4 billion has been set by the end of the second quarter, and P122 billion by the end of the third quarter.

The full-year government deficit cap was kept at P125 billion, equivalent to 21 percent of the projected gross domestic product for the year.

Andaya said the government was "sticking to its fighting target of balancing the budget by 2008."

The BOC is now expected to collect P196 billion to reflect "non-cash collections due to tax expenditure subsidies" to cover importations made by government agencies.

BOC Commissioner Napoleon Morales attributed the agency's strong revenue performance to its revenue enhancement programs.

Malacañang has appointed Morales as the new head of the government's task force against smuggling.

As for disbursements, the government has set a P1.1-trillion ceiling, up from the original spending target of P1.09 trillion. The budget is 16.6 percent higher than last year's P942.2 billion.

The P5.5 billion increase in projected government expenditures, Andaya said, would incorporate "tax expenditure subsidies" such as the payment of documentary stamp tax on government securities and taxes on government imports.

Total revenues are expected to increase by 22.4 percent to P974.1 billion over last year's actual collections.

The increase in both VAT rate and coverage is expected to drive up the Bureau of Internal Revenue's collections to P675.4 billion from last year's P534.5 billion.

SM claims no offer extended for EPCIB stock

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SM GROUP OF MALL TYCOON HENRY Sy yesterday said that no binding offer has been made on its 34-percent block in Equitable PCI Bank, the country's third largest bank.

The SM Group yesterday issued a statement in reaction to a report that the the mystery buyer of Equitable PCIBank last Tuesday submitted a "formal binding" offer of P20.5 billion for the 34-percent block held by the SM group and Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

"To this day, we have not received a binding offer for our shares," SM Group chief financial officer Jose T. Sio said in a statement sent to the INQUIRER. "What was sent to us was a statement of interest only."

SM Group lawyer Herrera Teehankee also sent a letter to Government Service Insurance System general manager Winston F. Garcia, informing him that there is "no binding offer to acquire the SM or Banco De Oro shares in Equitable PCI Bank from the Siguion Reyna law firm.

The Philippine Stock Exchange was furnished with a copy of Teehankee's letter.

Siguion Reyna is the law firm representing the unknown buyer and is the reported party communicating with Garcia on the SM shares.

In a letter dated March 31 to Garcia, signed by Siguion Reyna partner Rolando Mario G. Villonco, the law firm made it clear that its letter on the SM shares "shall constitute a statement of interest only," adding that it is also subject to several conditions.

BPI disposes of ₱6.3B in soured loans

THE BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS has sold P6.3 billion worth of soured loans to Avenue Asia, a leading distressed debt trading and asset management firm in Asia.

BPI's corporate secretary Carlos Aquino yesterday told the Philippine Stock Exchange the latest wholesale deal had brought to P17.3 billion the amount of nonperforming loans sold by the bank.

The bank said this latest asset sale, which was closed on Tuesday, reflected "the strong interest of foreign investors in Philippine assets and signifies better economic prospects for the country."

BPI sold P8.6 billion worth of NPLs to Morgan Stanley Emerging Markets Inc in 2004 and another P2.4-billion block last year, also to Avenue Asia.

Avenue Asia is an affiliate of Amroc Investments, one of the largest privately owned distressed asset management firms in the United States. It also earlier bought nearly P12 billion worth of NPLs from United Coconut Planters Bank.

BPI plans to unload as much as P10 billion in bad assets this year on the back of improved foreign investor interest on the country. The bank's optimism was not even hinged on the passage of the Special Purpose Vehicle Act extension—which the President is expected to soon sign into law.

"There's a lot more interest in going to the Philippines. Before we were talking to only one or two names (potential buyers) at any given time. Now we're talking to three to five names and we think they're talking to other banks too, so that's good for the country," BPI president Aurelio Montinola III said.

Prior to this transaction, BPI's bad assets stood at P45-P48 billion, consisting of around P34 billion worth of real and other properties owned and acquired and P14 billion in soured loans.

These also included bad assets inherited from BPI's latest acquisition, Prudential Bank.

BPI, whose NPL ratio increased to 6.8 percent with the takeover of bad assets from Prudential Bank, hopes to bring down the ratio to 5.5-6 percent.

At the same time, BPI hopes to boost its loan growth this year at a faster pace of 7-8 percent, and outperform the 3-4 percent projected loan growth for the banking industry.

BPI is the country's second biggest bank with assets of P446.41 billion at end-2005.

Doris C. Dumlao

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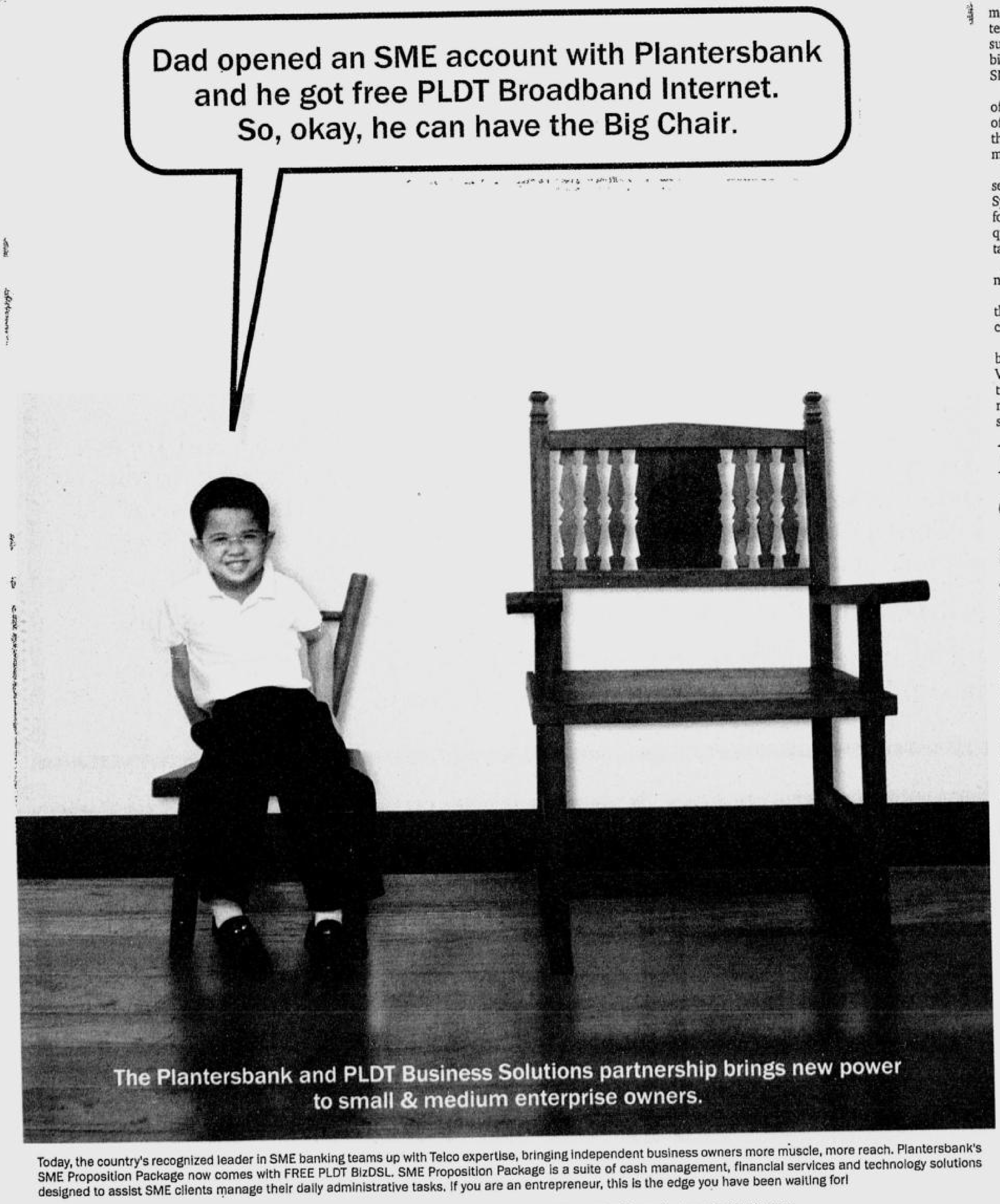
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MAGBAYAD NG TAMANG BUWIS
bago ang April 17 deadline.
11 DAYS TO GO
Ang Ating Kontribusyon Sa Solusyon

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart)
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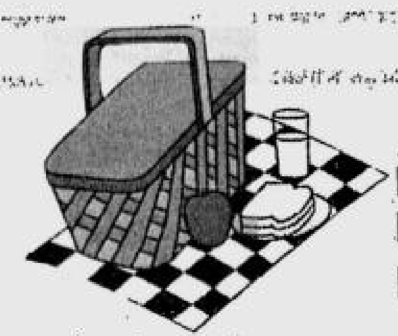

LET'S have a picnic!

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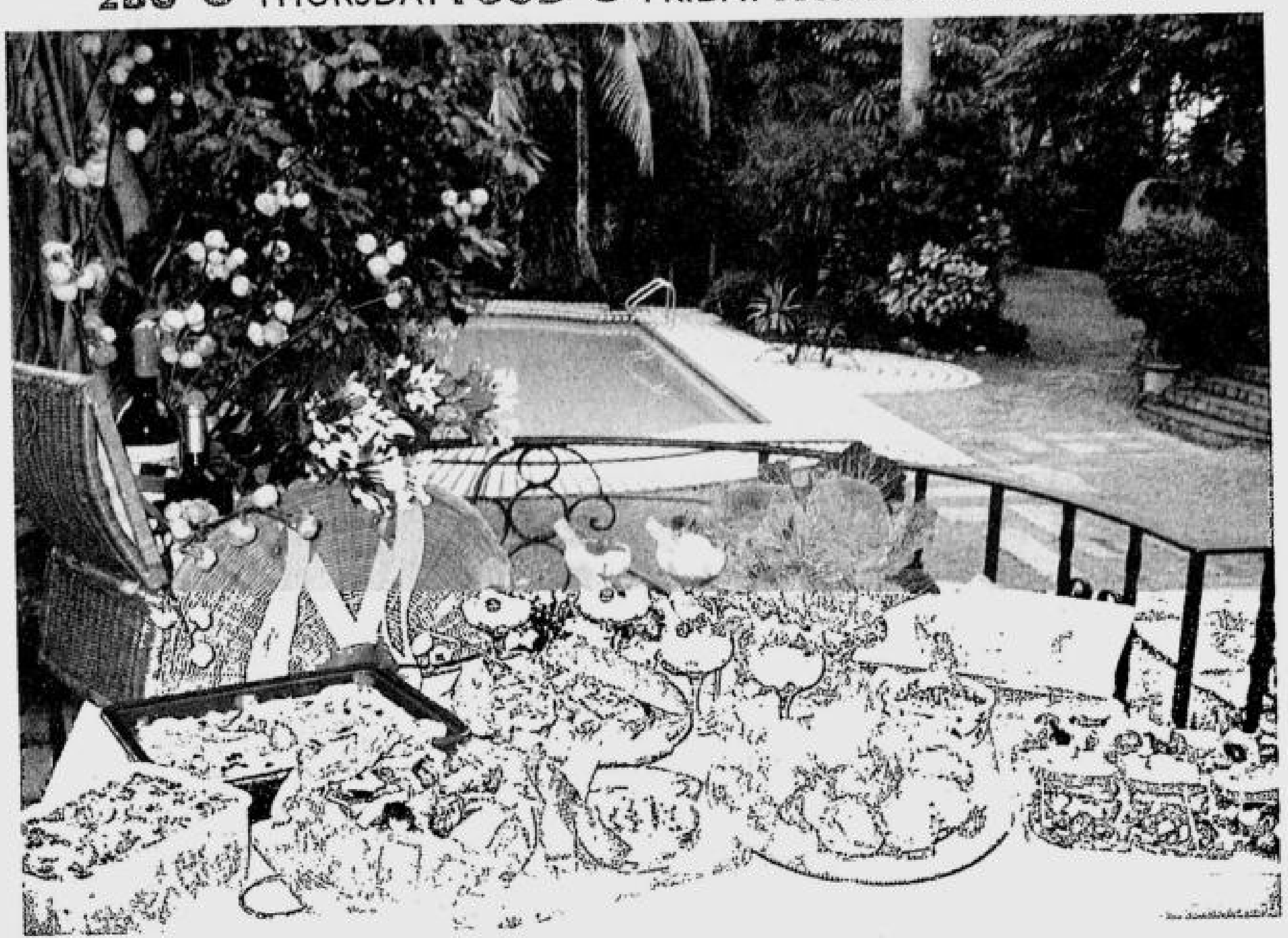

Eight chefs prepared their favorite picnic recipes for this mouth-watering spread.

An epicure's picnic

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

I LOVE PICNICS! BESIDES, I never pass up an opportunity to use my pretty English picnic basket.

But this time I wanted something different. I wanted this particular one to be grand. So, grand it was!

I brought along some of my favorite friends and the best names in the business—chefs David Pardo de Ayala, Ernie Babaran, Norbert Gandler, Rolando Laudico, Jessie Sincioco, Cyrille Soenen and Thomas Wenger. Eight chefs in a basket? Seemed like a dream!

I called each one and asked them to prepare their favorite picnic recipes. Oh boy! What a menu it turned out to be:

Avocado and Stilton Cheese Salad with Orange and Walnuts
Grilled Camembert
Scotch Eggs
Tomato and Kalamata Olive Bruschetta
Roast Beef Sandwich
Parma Ham, Arugula and Shaved Parmesan
Grilled Vegetarian Sandwich with Balsamic Onion Compote
Tuna Pan Bagnat done two ways: a la Pardo de Ayala and a la Wenger
Bicher Muesli
Fruit Trifle
Bread and Butter Pudding
Lemon Meringue Pie
Fresh Fruits in Mint and Orange Liqueur
Candied Nuts

There was so much food there was no need for me to prepare anything. But I decided to quickly make fresh fruit and candied nuts and to bring the other picnic necessities to complete the assignment, like wine: Beringer Founders' Estate Chardonnay and Merlot; talcum powder, a must, to dust the ground and keep the ants away; chalk to line the picnic perimeter to repel bugs; flowers, candles, table cloths, napkins, cutlery, glasses, plates, wine opener and an iPod.

The next task was to find a spot with a view—a picnic essential! Unfortunately, it was overcast, the sun didn't shine. Making the best out of the situation, and with so much good food, the show went on.

So we picnicked at home. I set the table and, by the time I finished, it was a quarter to six. Rod Stewart crooned "Let's Fall in Love" in the background. It was terribly romantic!

The decision to stay put turned out to be a wise one, for shortly after—of all days—it began to drizzle. Truly, you can't have everything. But somehow, last Thursday, looking at the pretty picnic table, I felt that I did.

We are sharing our recipes with you. However, if you feel lazy, just call the chefs and make all your picnic dreams come true!

From chef Norbert Gandler, director of culinary, pastry and bakery arts, International School for Culinary Arts and Hotel Management:

Norbert's Avocado and Stilton Cheese Salad with Orange and Walnuts

3 pcs avocados, cut into cubes
150 g stilton cheese, crumbled
3 pcs orange, cut into segments
50 g walnuts, crumbled

AN EPICURE'S/ C3

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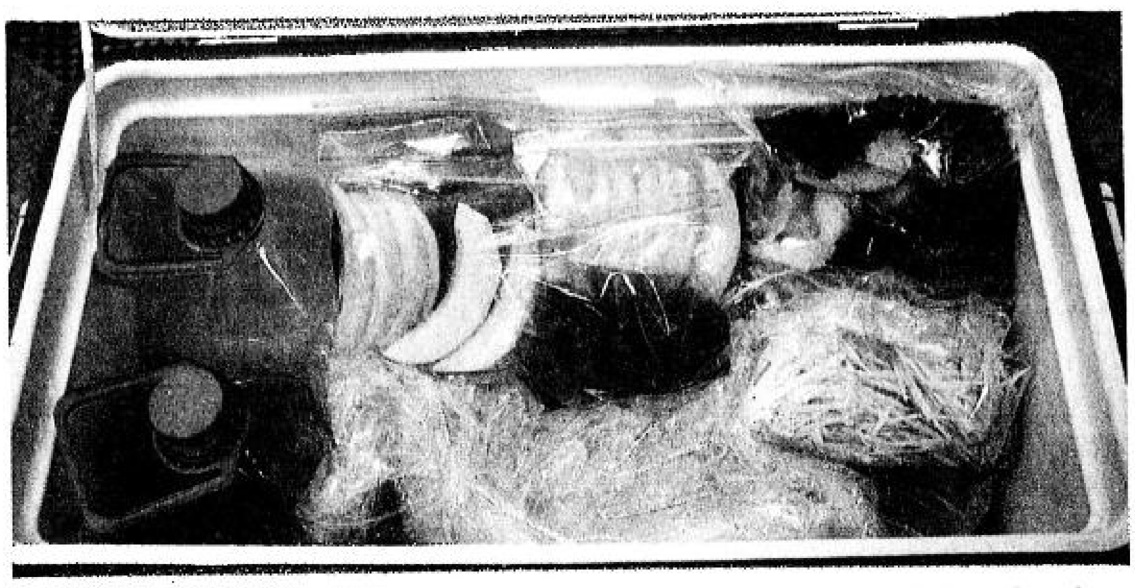


PLACE cold foods and drinks in an insulated cooler with plenty of ice. Note bite-sized fruits and veggies packed in resealable plastic bags.

ADD the cold cuts.

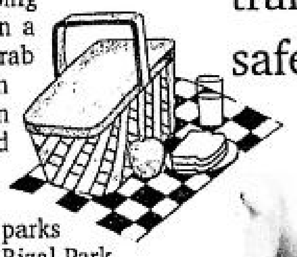
AND your choice cheeses

Glenda Barretto on how to pack for a picnic

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

'Tis the season for family outings, but do you know how to transport the food safely and with style?

SUMMERTIME MEANS PICNIC time. Going on a picnic means forgetting your worries, sitting on the grass, munching on chips, exchanging banter and doing practically nothing on a lazy afternoon. So, grab your basket, fill it with lots of food, put on some sunblock and let's go on a picnic!



Some people enjoy picnicking in city parks (Quezon City Circle, Rizal Park, CCP grounds, Parks and Wildlife, to name a few) while others go up north to Zambales for the beach or south to Batangas for the lovely view. A few others, like top restaurateur Glenda Barretto, go picnicking in cemeteries because then she gets to do two things at one outing: visit her dearly departed and bond with the living.

Planning a picnic is easy. The hard part is the preparation. Barretto, a veteran at preparing outdoor food, having catered one too many al fresco affairs, offers some practical tips to safely prepare, pack and serve food for an outing.

In planning a picnic, consider the number of people in the group. Not having enough food for all picnickers would be a disaster. On the other hand, more food than people might result in wasted leftovers.

When preparing the menu, Barretto says to stick to food that don't spoil easily. "Food cooked with vinegar or soy sauce will be the safe ones."

A cooler is safer

When packing food, although a basket is much more romantic, a cooler is safer. Barretto always takes along two sturdy coolers—one for cold food, the other for hot dishes.

"Food can spoil easily on hot summer days. If picnic foods are not handled safely, they can cause food-borne illnesses," she cautions.

Food products containing eggs, such as mayonnaise, are likely to spoil or even create a bacteria-friendly environment when allowed to warm up. Barretto recommends foods that don't require refrigeration like fresh fruit salad instead of pasta salad.

In packing a cooler, she suggests filling it up with lots of ice placed in durable plastic bags.

Pack the cold stuff like salad greens, cold cuts, juices, sandwiches (minus the mayo), cut fruits, cheeses or wines directly from the refrigerator or freezer into the cooler, placing food to be kept coldest at the bottom. Remember, put food in the cooler in the order opposite to using them. This means that the food you'll need last should be packed first, at the bottom.

Similarly, hot food should be taken directly from the heat source (oven, stove or microwave), packed in insulated containers and arranged accordingly in the thermo box. Never store hot and cold foods together.

You can also prepare some foods the night before and not have to worry about them at all. Barretto braises or stews her *adobo* the night before but fries the meat in the morning as she thickens the sauce.

"I place it in a plastic container that I seal tightly, it goes straight to the thermo box and I don't open it until we are ready to eat," Barretto says.

If you take hot food, it's best to wrap the dish in towels or a tablecloth to keep it warm.

Of course, don't pack the perishables into the cooler until you're almost ready to leave. Place cooler in the shade upon arrival at the picnic site and keep lid closed whenever possible.

The ice will come in handy for chilling the drinks, and any that melts serves as additional ice water. If possible, don't drain the water from the melted ice, as it will be of benefit in keeping food cool.

HAVE COOLERS, will travel. Experienced restaurateur and caterer Glenda Barretto knows the science of feeding picnickers.

DON'T forget to pack the wine in the cooler.

WRAP your breakables in cling wrap or bubble wrap to keep them safe during the journey.

Serving size

She divides the food into meal-size portions and packs it according to when she plans to serve it.

She cuts the fruit, say watermelon, in half and then in quarters, before placing in self-sealing plastic bags. As for mangoes, she cuts them in half and seals them.

It's an absolute must to squeeze lemon juice over your cut-up fruit. It helps the fruit retain its natural coloring and slows down the browning process.

You can also take small individual packets of salt, pepper, sugar and condiments (ketchup, mustard, relish, soy sauce or whatever suits your fancy) and place them in a small zipper-top plastic bag.

Take along desserts already in serving sizes, such as cupcakes, muffins, cookies and bars. Look for sweet things that will stand up to the journey. Don't bring cakes that easily melt.

As for breads, put them in a cloth-lined basket and cling-wrap the entire basket to keep dirt out.

Barretto discourages picnic-goers to bring takeout foods from fast-food joints like fried chicken since they spoil easily if not eaten right away. If you buy takeout foods like fried chicken and barbecue, eat them within two hours of pickup.

Try to bring just the right amount of food so you won't have to worry about the storage or safety of leftovers.

If there are leftovers, Barretto requires putting them in the cooler. If there is still ice left in your cooler when you get home, the leftovers are okay to eat. If not, they should be discarded.

The secrets of a successful picnic are simplicity, careful planning and packing. For Barretto, eating picnic foods is not about how much you spend, but how much you enjoy the experience.

Below are Barretto's ideal picnic recipes.

Chicken Adobo

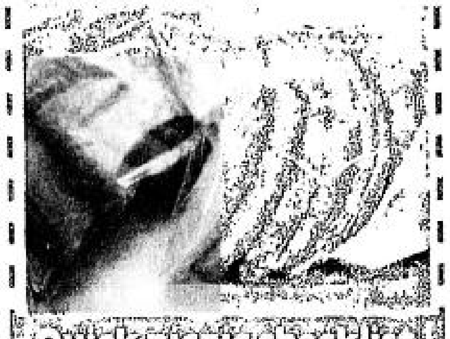
2 pc whole chicken, 1.4-k size each
1 ½ c vinegar
¾ cup soy sauce
2 tbsp garlic, minced
4 pc bay leaves
½ tsp peppercorn, crushed
½ liter water (2 c)
2 c oil for frying

Cut each chicken into serving pieces and place in a bowl with the rest of the ingredients, except for oil. Marinate in the refrigerator overnight.

Place chicken pieces with marinade in a casserole. Add water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 30-40 minutes or until chicken is tender. Remove chicken and strain the sauce.

In a frying pan, brown the chicken pieces in hot oil until crisp on all sides. Drain in a colander and transfer to a platter. Reheat the sauce and reduce to a thick, flowing consistency, strain, then pour over chicken.

GLENDA/ C3



Quick picnic checklist!

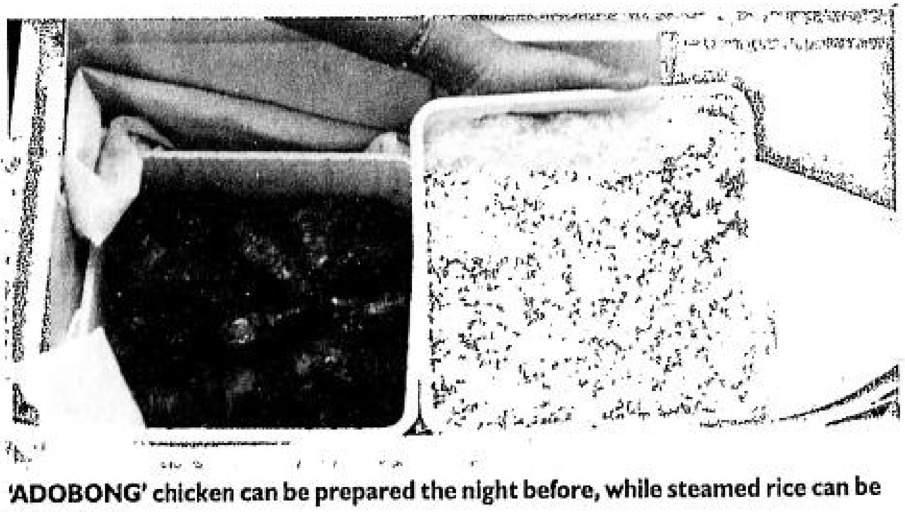
Things to bring

- Two large, sturdy coolers or styrofoam chests for hot and cold dishes
- Tight-lidded plastic containers
- Small re-sealable plastic bags
- Lots and lots of ice
- Comfy picnic blanket
- Picnic baskets or hampers
- Tablecloths
- Cling wrap
- Moist towelettes in case soap and water are not available
- Disposable plastic or paper plates
- Hard-wearing plastic forks and spoons
- Plastic glasses
- Paper napkins or paper towels
- Bread knife or sharp knife
- Can opener or corkscrew
- First-aid kit
- Kitchen towel
- Insect repellant
- Candles or matches for night picnic
- Sunscreen
- Lightweight folding chairs/stools
- Garbage bags for your rubbish

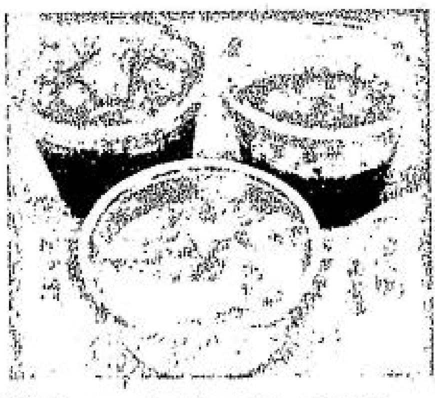
Things to remember

- Bring food that doesn't spoil easily, such as dishes cooked with soy sauce or vinegar.
- Pack the cold stuff (salad greens, cold cuts, juices, cut fruits, cheeses or wines) directly from the refrigerator or freezer into the cooler.
- Put food in the cooler in the order opposite to serving them, meaning the food you'll eat last should be packed first, at the very bottom.
- Hot food should be taken directly from the heat source, packed in insulated containers and arranged accordingly in the thermo box.
- Divide the food into meal-size portions and pack according to when you plan to serve it.
- Cut up fresh fruit in bite sizes before placing in self-sealing plastic bags or tightly sealed plastic containers.
- Bring desserts in serving sizes, such as cupcakes, muffins, cookies and bars.
- Pack the perishables into the cooler only when you're almost ready to leave.
- Place cooler in shade upon arrival at the picnic site and keep lid closed whenever possible.

HOT food should be taken directly from the heat source, packed in tight-lidded containers and arranged accordingly in the thermo box.



'ADOBONG' chicken can be prepared the night before, while steamed rice can be cooked last.



TOTE sauces for the pasta, salad or chicken to the picnic in small plastic containers.

BARRETTO'S Roast Chicken

THE "GANDLER" Platter: Tomato and Kalamata Olive Bruschetta, Roast Beef Sandwich and Parma Ham Sandwich with Arugula and Shaved Parmesan (above); Chef Norbert Gandler, director of Culinary, Pastry and Bakery Arts, International School for Culinary Arts and Hotel Management (right)

An epicure's picnic

From page C1

100 g bell peppers, julienne
Lemon juice, to taste
Olive oil, to taste
Salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste

Combine ingredients in a bowl and season to taste with lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper.

Tomato and Kalamata Olive Bruschetta

10 slices rye bread
5 pcs red ripe tomatoes, peeled, de-seed, cut into concasse
150 g kalamata olives, de-seed, cut into cubes
50 g feta cheese, cubed
Basil leaves, julienne
Extra virgin olive oil

Mix all ingredients together and season to taste with olive oil, salt, pepper, lemon juice and julienne basil leaves. Sprinkle olive oil on the rye bread slices. Grill or toast in the oven.

Cut a peeled garlic clove in half and rub over the toasted bread. Top with the tomato mixture and garnish with basil leaves.

Parma Ham with Arugula and Shaved Parmesan

10 slices rye bread
20 slices parma ham
100 g arugula
10 pcs cherry tomatoes
parmesan cheese, shaved
basil pesto spread

Sprinkle pesto on the rye bread slices. Arrange arugula leaves on the bread. Top with parma ham. Garnish with cherry tomatoes (cut in half) and shaved parmesan cheese.

Roast Beef

20 slices brioche
30 slices roast beef
70 g mustard mayonnaise
100 g salad leaves
10 pieces cornichon
10 slices red radish
1 pc mango

Toast sliced brioche or any other bread. Spread mustard mayonnaise on both slices of brioche. Place salad leaves on one slice of bread and arrange three slices of roast beef over the salad leaves. Cover with the other brioche slice. Garnish with mango, radish and cornichon skewer.

NORBERT'S Avocado and Stilton Cheese Salad with orange and walnuts

And here is a recipe from Chef Cyrille Soenen, executive chef, Crowne Plaza Galleria and Holiday Inn Galleria:

Grilled Camembert Soenen

1 French Camembert cheese round, packed into a wooden box
Small pieces of bread

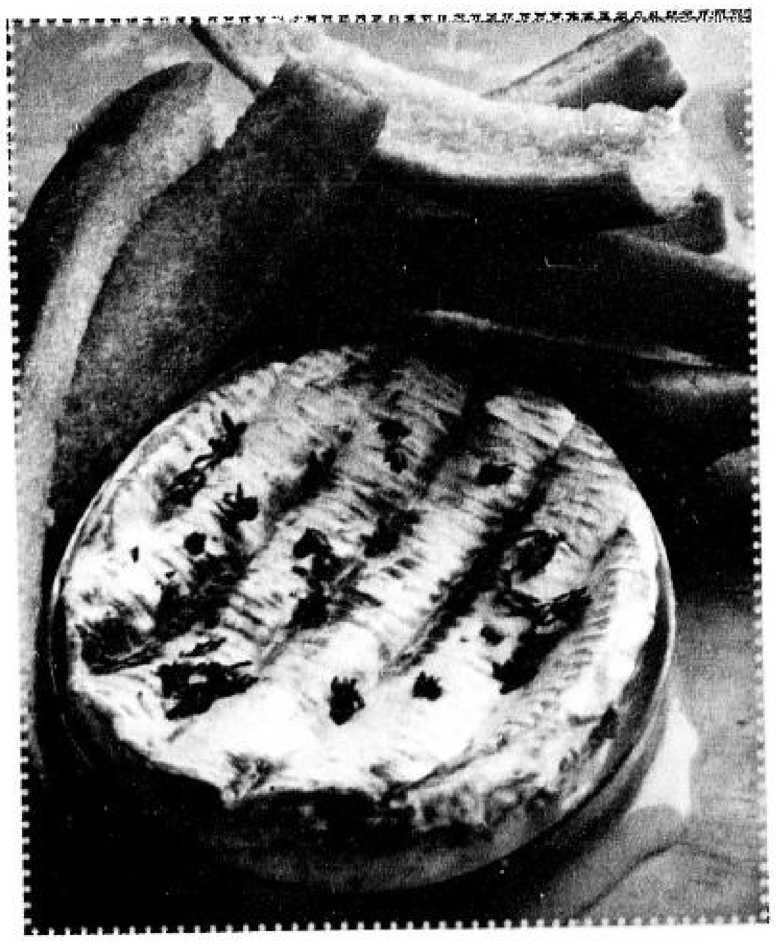
Remove paper wrapping around cheese; transfer cheese back into wooden box. Put back cover.

In a barbecue pit, lay grilling rack as close to coals as possible, bottom of cheese box should be almost touching coals. Put camembert on rack. The cheese is ready when its cover pops out. The hot cheese will push the cover off. Approximately 10 minutes.

Remove the top of the box, remove cheese crust with the tip of a knife and enjoy, dipping in bread bites.

This is all I have space for. Picnic Recipes Part 2, next week!

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph



CHEF Cyrille Soenen, executive chef of Crowne Plaza Galleria and Holiday Inn Galleria

GRILLED Camembert Soenen

Glenda Barretto on how . . .

From page C2

Broiled Pork Belly
2 k pork belly, sliced thinly
Marinade:
1 tbsp salt
1 ½ tsp peppercorn, crushed
2 tbsp garlic, minced
2 tbsp brown sugar
2 tbsp soy sauce
Dipping Sauce:
1 ¼ c vinegar
¾ c soy sauce
2 tbsp garlic, minced

Combine all marinade ingredients. Marinate pork overnight.

Remove pork and grill until meat is cooked through. Place pork on a platter and keep warm.

Combine ingredients of dipping sauce together. Serve sauce on the side.

Suha at Labanos
1 pc pomelo (approximately 960 g)
1 pc radish, julienne (approximately 250 g)
Dressing:
1/8 c olive oil
½ tbsp French mustard
¼ tbsp cane vinegar
Dash of salt and pepper
Dash of white sugar
1 pc spring onion, for garnish
10 g lettuce

Peel and segment pomelo. Combine with radish and set aside.

In a mixing bowl, combine the ingredients for the dressing and set aside.

Toss pomelo-radish mixture with the dressing. Arrange lettuce on salad plate and top with pomelo-radish salad. Garnish with spring onion.

SMOKE GOES OUT,
TASTE OF FOOD STAYS IN.

Elba gas range with chimney-like funnel.

CHIMNEY-LIKE FUNNEL

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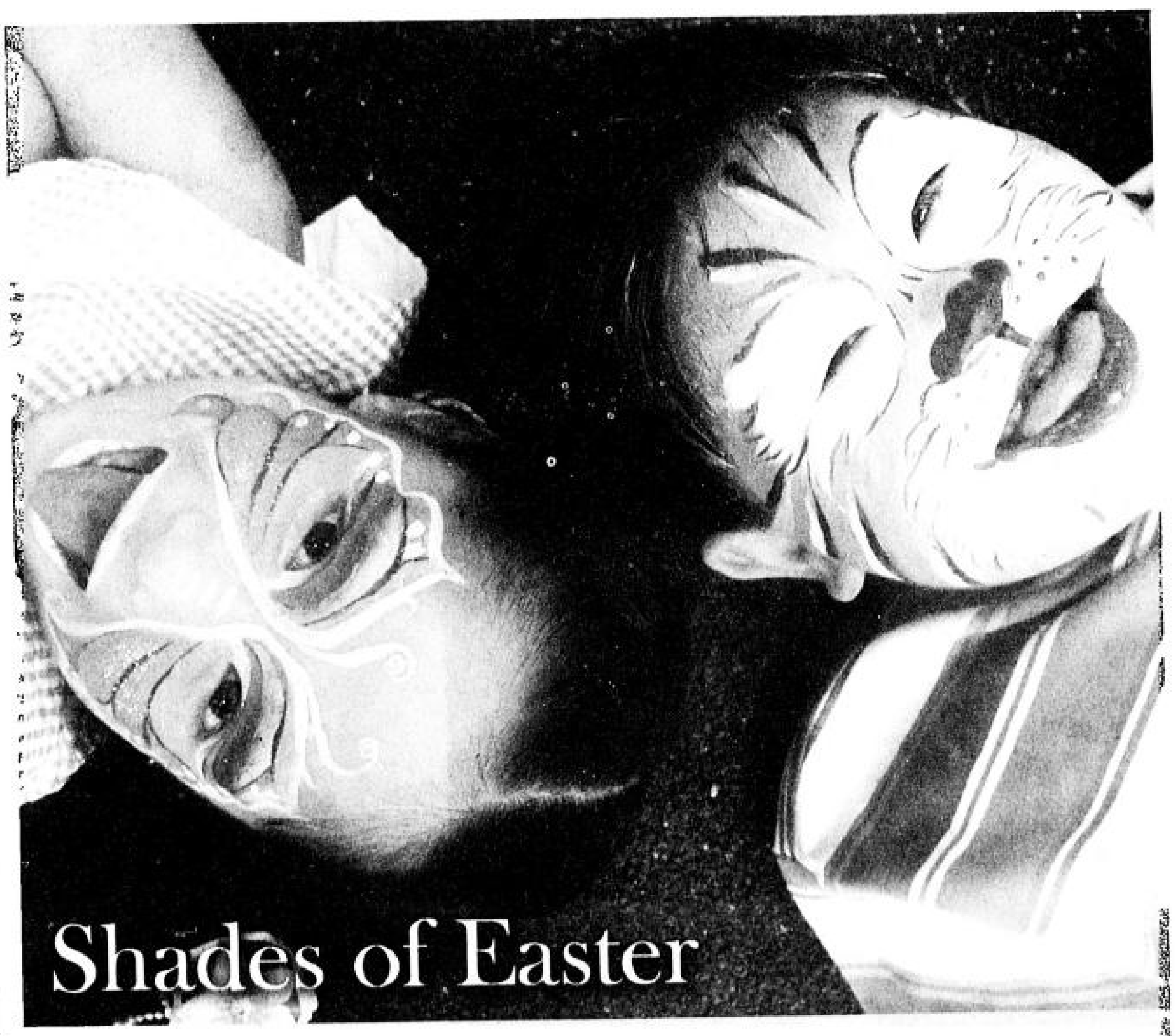

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BAMBOO and banana leaves hark back to traditional picnics. Plastic utensils add the modern touch. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

A FAMILY picnic by the beach in the '60s

Picnics from way back

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

LET ME BRING you to a picnic during Jose Rizal's time.

And what way is there but through his novel, "Noli Me Tangere," where in Chapter 23 (A Fishing Expedition), Maria Clara and her friends, together with older ladies and maids went on a lake adventure, presumably on Laguna de Bay. The novel's hero, Crisostomo Ibarra, played host and he brought his friends as well.

The day began with a boat ride. Lunch was on the banks of Ibarra's land. He outfitted one of the bancas with carpets, cushions and rugs to make the women comfortable. One banca even had earthenware stoves where tea, coffee, chocolate and *salabat* were brewing, their breakfast beverage.

What would provide for the party's lunch were the fish traps that were not disturbed for several days to ensure a big harvest.

Maria Clara's Aunt Isabel instructed the boatman's son not to get the fish if the *sinigang* broth wasn't ready. The author noted that Aunt Isabel knew that the less time fish spent out of the water the fresher it would be.

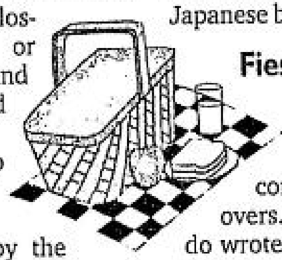
For the broth, Rizal wrote about the classic mix of rice water, tomatoes and *kamias*. Apparently, there were more ingredients to be included as the book described how "...the other girls peeled squash, shucked peas or cut spring onions into pieces the size of cigarettes."

Rizal, the novelist, added some drama with the killing of a crocodile found in one fish trap. The other traps, however, yielded just fish that Aunt Isabel rightfully segregated according to how each variety should be cooked: "The *ayungin* is good for the *sinigang*. Leave the *bia* for the *escabeche*. The *dalag* and the *buan-buan* for the *pesa*... The lobsters to the frying pan! The *banak* is to be roasted, wrapped in banana leaves and stuffed with tomatoes."

It is presumed that rice was taken together with those freshwater fish, either waiting in a *palayok* or already wrapped in individual banana leaf packets. Earlier in the chapter, makeshift awnings were described to have fruits hanging from them such as pineapples, *kasuy* (the cashew fruit is called *balubad*), bananas, guavas and *lanzones*.

Festive times

Picnics presuppose festive times and the pilgrimage to Antipolo, when women were carried on hammocks and men rode on horses, must have been one such happy occasion. Prepared food was sold in the towns of Cainta and Pasig at the foot of the hills. In a previous column, I described how one packet consisted of *kare-kare* with *bagoong*, white rice, *kilawin* of banana blossoms, boiled or steamed shrimps and chicken *adobo* fried crisp.



I suppose that up on the hills, the full lunch would be supplemented by the *suman sa ibos* with mangoes, a combination similar to the Thai sticky rice with mangoes. There would be cashew nuts also. These days, however, the *casuy* sold in Antipolo comes all the way from Palawan. And several restaurants now line the streets so no picnic food needs to be brought up.

My introduction to another kind of picnic pack was at the Balaw Balaw Restaurant in Angono, Rizal. The late Digon Vocalan, proprietor and artist, ordered for me this huge *bilao* of food combinations—rice, pork *adobo*, fried *hito*, grilled *tilapia* and vegetables such as eggplant and *kangkong*. He called it *minaluto*.

I thought then it was just one way of presenting the equivalent of a Filipino combo-meal that they serve in fast-food places, or it was our own version of the Japanese bento box.

Fiesta leftovers

Minaluto turned out to be the picnic pack of Angono, usually comprised of fiesta leftovers. Gilda Cordero Fernando wrote that the combinations would be meat dishes like *adobo, menudo* and *asado*, all mixed together, placed on top of a mound of rice, and all that topped with a salted egg then wrapped in banana leaf ("Philippine Food & Life," Anvil Publishing, 1992).

My first encounter with leftovers as picnic item was when I asked why the bakery was closed the day after a hometown fiesta. I was told that the workers, with the owners, went to the beach bringing with them leftover fiesta food.

I didn't witness that picnic. But two weeks ago, on a trip to the White Island, a sandbar off Camiguin Island, a picnic of leftovers was brought out on a small table. That included the remnants of a *lechon* and pieces of sweet-and-sour fish. The lady guarding the food told me there was a wedding the night before and some of the party were going to eat the leftover for breakfast after a swim.

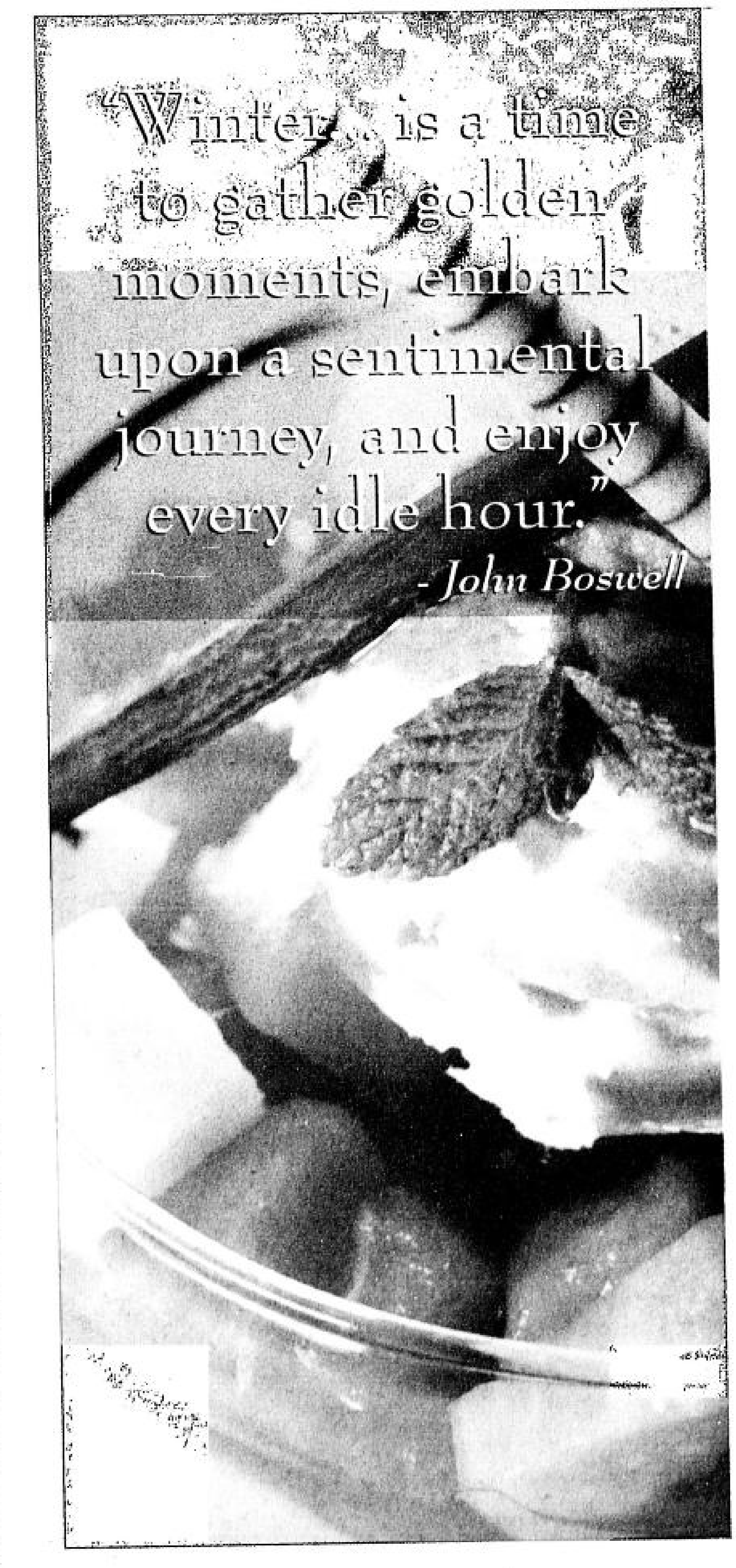
Of course, you don't have to wait to have a party or fiesta to picnic afterwards. For my friend in Angeles, Pampanga, the only items his family starts out with are the drinks, dipping sauces and rice. Then they pass by Nepo Mart to buy cooked food from the many *turo-turo* stalls there. So they can have *tocino, tapang damulag* (carabao meat), *inihaw na hito* accompanied by *balo-balo* (fermented rice with shrimp) and *mustasa* leaves. *Pastillas* can be their dessert and *butong pakwan* and peanuts, their snacks.

For my family who loves picnics by the riverbank or by the beach, we have much simpler fare—mangoes, *adobo* and rice. We never pack utensils so we use our hands both to mash the *adobo* into the rice and to eat the mixture expertly. Mangoes are peeled, eaten to the bone, making a mess of faces and swimwear. It takes only one jump into river or sea for everyone to be clean again.

Our picnics may not be as elaborate as the "Fishing Expedition" of Rizal's novel but the setting and the sense of fun will always make picnic food both extraordinary and memorable.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

The setting and the sense of fun will always make the food both extraordinary and memorable


"Winter... is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour."
- John Boswell

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CHINESE MONK offers special Lenten dishes such as Kung Pao Shrimps, Sweet and Sour Fish Fillet, Szechuan Prawns, Clams In Oyster Sauce, Steamed Cuttlefish, Chili Crab, Fish with Tofu Hot Pot, Fried Lapu-Lapu with Black Bean Sauce, Scallops with Asparagus, Crab with Sotanghon and Seafood medley, among others. Tofu and vegetable dishes include Mapo Tofu, Braised Tofu, Sesame Tofu, Tofu with Abalone Sauce, Polonchay Delight, Shrimp Asparagus, Vegetable Deluxe, Braised Eggplant, Broccoli with Abalone Sauce. Chinese Monk is at 1/L, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati. Call 8974129 or 8973785.

BURGOO offers seafood and vegetable dishes this Lent. There's Fried Calamari, Lemon Peppered Grilled Lapu-Lapu, Spinach Grilled Salmon, Seafood Aglio Olio, Grilled Squid a la Pobre, Prawn Oreganato, Friday Fish Fry, among others. Call 9277424, 8981815, 6875254, 7264663 and 9136112.

T.G.I.FRIDAY'S has a BBQ promo until June 30. It offers the best barbecue traditions from America. The menu includes the Best BBQ Chicken, sliced pork tenderloin in America's Best BBQ Pork Tenderloin, Friday's original baby back ribs in America's Best BBQ Ribs (half and full slab), and two skewers of succulent plump shrimp grilled to perfection in America's Best BBQ Shrimp. The BBQ promo is available at T.G.I.Friday's branches at Glorietta 3, Makati; Robinsons Place Manila; Hotel Rembrandt on Tomas Morato, Quezon City; Alabang Town Center; and Sta. Lucia East.

SULO HOTEL features Japanese fusion. The Sushi Bar and Teppanyaki presents chef's specialties like the Kobe Tofu Steak, Yakitori, Sunriser Maki, Fiery Tuna Salad, Shitake Shinjo Age, Boracay Maki, Roosevelt Sashi, Spicy Shake Temaki, Kamikaze Rolls, among others. The Sushi Bar is open 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and 6-10:30 p.m. Call 9245051 to 71.

HYATT Hotel and Casino presents a 30-percent discount in Pastry Boutique when you dine in any of the hotel's restaurants. Savor Cantonese cuisine at Li Li, prime meats and seafood dishes at the Fireplace or dine in the Market Café to earn the discount, available the whole month of April. Just present your dining receipt to get the discount. Call 2451234.

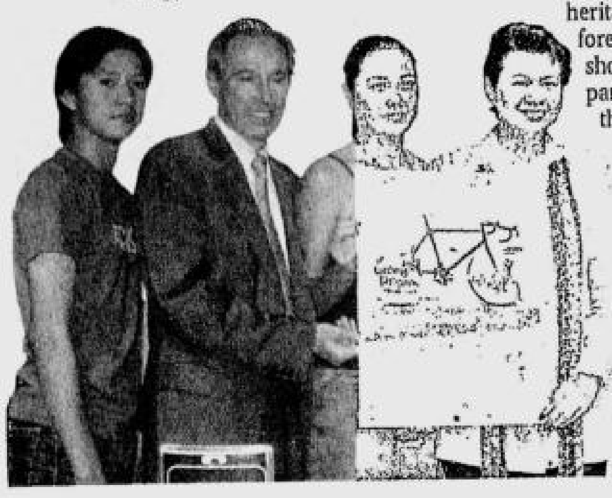
OUTBACK offers its eight-ounce Angus Prime Rib with Garden Fresh Salad and Side Dish for a special Sunday price of P815 this whole month of April. The offer is available in Outback branches in Glorietta 4, Libis and Alabang Town Center. Call 7721845, 7298485 and 6343801.

SUPER BOWL of China extends its graduation promo "Long Live the Graduates" to April 9. For a minimum purchase of P1,000, a graduate gets a free regular order of a noodle dish of his choice.

KITARO, the Japanese chain, offers free delivery for orders of party trays, including the Samurai Mini Party Tray consisting of 26 pieces of sushi and maki for P415 and the All- Sashimi Feast, with 105 pieces, for P2,310. Also available in the 41 outlets nationwide of Kitaro are the Shogun (sashimi, sushi and maki) and the All-California Maki feast party trays. Call 9111115.

Makabayang Galing. Pilipinong Magiting.

Galing Pilipino Movement
LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour



Undoing the past to rebuild the future

THE PHILIPPINES HAS A RICH HEROIC heritage. As a group of island nation-states before the Western colonizers came to our shores, we were highly regarded trading partners by our neighbors. We were called the 'entrepot' of Asia. The Philippine Revolution of 1898 gave rise to the first colonial Asian state to obtain its independence from a Western colonizer. The American regime evolved the first democratic republic in Asia --- the Republic of the Philippines. With such a laudable past, it frustrates many of us to see our country fall short of its potential greatness.

To proactively address this angst, the Galing Pilipino Movement, a non profit, private sector initiative of concerned citizens have chosen to put the focus on what is good and galing about Pilipinos and the Philippines as a counter force against the seeming hopelessness and helplessness pervading our social climate nowadays. Come April 9, when we traditionally celebrate our Araw ng Kagitingan by remembering the valor of defeat that came with the Fall of Bataan and Corregidor, GPM will break tradition and propound a new mindset.

We will re-focus the commemoration of this notable historical event through the Galing Pilipino LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour, an educational-cultural bike tour that will retrace in reverse the grueling death march by Pilipino and American WWII veterans from Bataan to Tarlac. This event seeks to achieve a consciousness reversal that will redeem the way we see our history, our culture and our heritage. Thus, the LakBYKE Tour will start from Capas, Tarlac, lead up to San Fernando, Pampanga, and end in Mariveles and Balanga, Bataan. At each stopover and in selected historical markers, local festivities have been organized, highlighting the unique Galing Pilipino traditions, practices and appropriate historical perspectives that will help us develop a better sense of our history and appreciate our heritage.

For the downcast, this GPM event will rekindle the fire of nationalism. For the skeptic, you will behold what the true bayanihan spirit is all about. For the hopeful, you will experience a fresh surge of patriotism as you see 15-year old Joshuas or 21-year old Jessies and many like them who have brought the LakBYKE Mabuhay vision into reality through great personal sacrifice and indomitable strength of purpose. Join us at the sites or join us in spirit. Let us re-build a galing future together.

LAKBYKE Mabuhay Tour 2006

Pinaghirapang kalayaan.

Huwag kalimutan.

Huwag pabayaan.

Paggunita sa Diwa ng Bataan

SOME INTERESTING HISTORICAL THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

[] Is it a historical fact that it was the US General Edward King who surrenderd to the Japanese, compelling the US-commissioned Filipino forces into the infamous 'death march'?

[] Is it true that the surrender involved some 70,000 American and Filipino fighters and the Japanese contingent numbering about 27,000?

[] What were the three strategic plans to combat Japanese aggression?

[] Did you know that Villamor Air Base was named in honor of Lt. Jesus Villamor who led aging p-26 fighters against the more modern-Japanese planes in World War II?

SOME INTERESTING HISTORICAL TIDBITS ABOUT WORLD WAR II

[] The Japanese War Plan, which was decided months before, called for simultaneous strikes at US and British positions in Asia and the Pacific. Pearl Harbor would be attacked to immobilize the US fleet and clear the flanks for various invasions. Wake, Guam, Malaya, Hongkong and the Philippines would be invaded in quick succession.

[] Assigned to invade the Philippines was the Japanese 14th Army under the command of Lt. Gen. Masaharu Homma who was given 50 days to complete his mission to take and capture the Philippines.

[] Japanese struck Pearl Harbor on December 8. Invaded and took Malaya (Malaysia) and Batan Island in the Batanes within hours after that. Japanese planes bombed Baguio and Davao before noon and hit Clark and Iba Air Fields before the day was over.

[] After less than a week of war, MacArthur virtually lost control of the sea and air but he he had faith on the Pilipinos on the beaches. Pilipinos, outraged at the audacity of the Japanese to attack the Philippines, rose to the challenge and volunteered for service in this time of war. ROTC cadets in their teens joined farmers from the fields in battling the invading enemy.

[] Way beyond the 50 days mandate, Homma failed to conquer the Philippines. Elsewhere in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the Japanese had already taken Guam, Hongkong, Wake Island, Malaya and Singapore. ONLY THE PHILIPPINES STOOD AGAINST THE JAPANESE.

[] Allies spoke highly of Pilipino courage and heroism. US President Roosevelt cabled President Manuel Quezon praising Pilipinos for "upholding the most magnificent traditions of free democracy". British Prime Minister Winston Chruchill remarked that the Pilipino soldier was "the best warrior in the world".

PENINSULA DE PUNTA FUEGO

The jewel of all Landco Pacific developments – Peninsula de Punta Fuego is located in Nasugbu, Batangas. The 88-hectare flame shaped peninsula is a world-class residential beach resort fused with a Spanish Mediterranean theme. It is where some of the most prominent families in Metro Manila refer to as their weekend getaway.

PLAYA Calatagán

From brilliant sunsets to the aroma of fresh grilled seafood, life in Playa Calatagan promises to be anything but dull. It is the country's first residential tourism estate offering the best swimming beach, a leisure commercial center fused with the old world charm and simplicity of life in Calatagan.

AMARA en TERRAZAS
LUXURY OCEANFRONT APARTMENTS

Amara en Terrazas Oceanfront Residences in Nasugbu, Batangas is the most recent addition to the Punta Fuego community. A marriage of the leisure lifestyle with condominium living in a fusion of Spanish Mediterranean and tropical Asian themes, it offers two or three-bedroom apartments, each with a unique and absolutely breathtaking view of the South China Sea.

TERRAZAS de PUNTA FUEGO

Built on gently sloping terrain in Nasugbu, Batangas, Terrazas de Punta Fuego is a natural amphitheater nestled in a lush paradise that slips into an 800-meter stretch of immaculate sand and pristine waters. Seven pocket enclaves hemmed by lush vegetation and built to sumptuous adobes that fuse Hispanic elegance with the breezy appeal of Tropical Asian design.

The temperate climate and the fertile soil provide the perfect setting for Leisure Farms in Lemery, Batangas and Ponderosa Leisure Farms in Silang, Cavite – the country's first residential communities devoted to weekend farming. Harvest the freshest fruits of your labor. Landco's leisure farms guarantee refreshing if not productive weekends.

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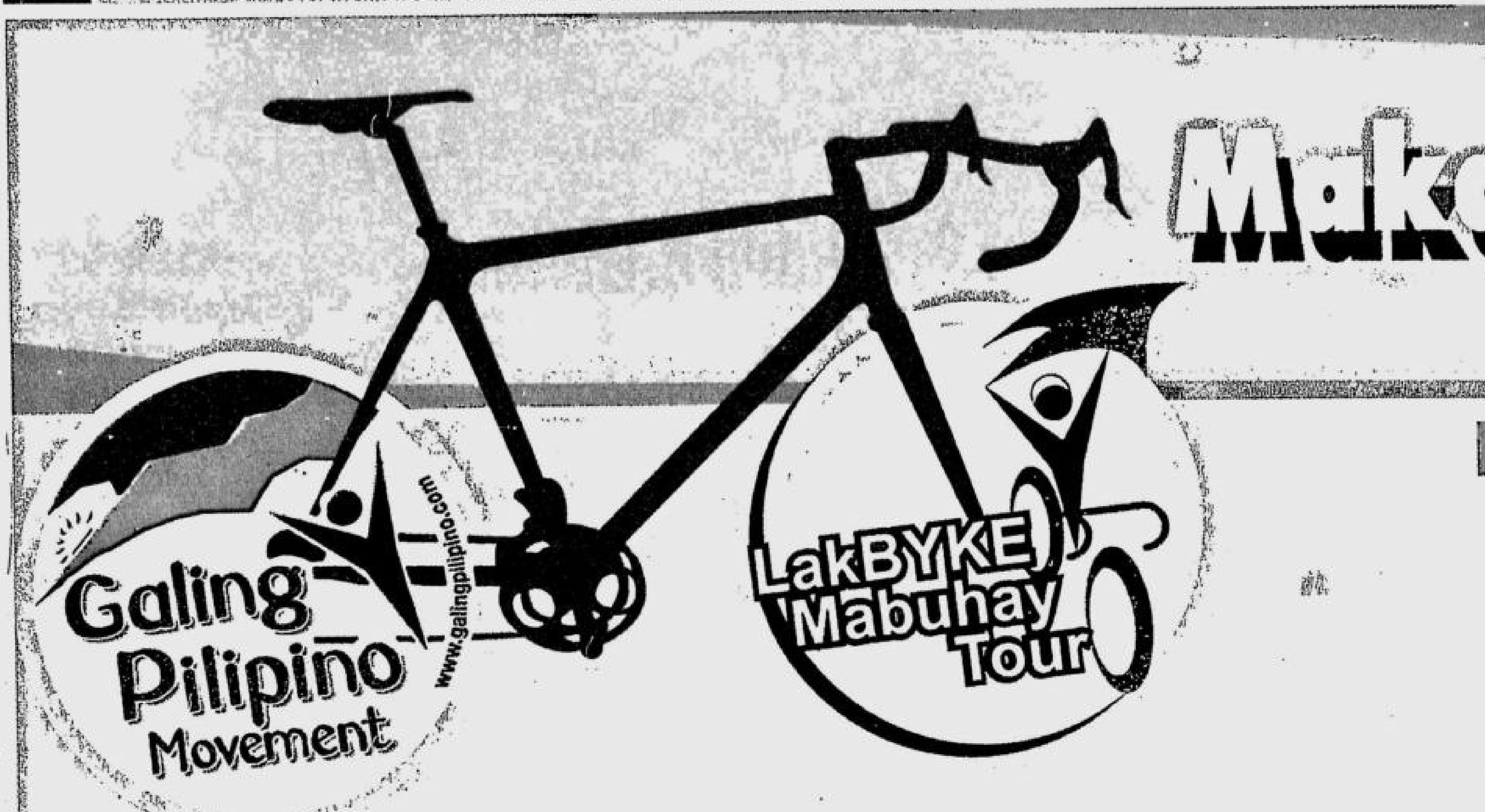

The Galing Spirit of April 9

DECEMBER 8, 1941. JAPAN STRUCK PEARL HARBOR IN Hawaii, invaded Malaya and overran it. Japanese tota-tora planes took Batan Island in the Batanes within hours; bombed Baguio and Davao just as the sun was rising; hit Clark and Iba airfields by noon. It looked like a goner war for the US and the Philippines.

Professor Ricardo Jose wrote in his Battle for Battle primer that Lt.Gen. Masaharu Homma of the 14th Army of Japan was given only 50 days to take the Philippines. After less than a week of war, Mac Arthur had virtually lost control of the sea and air. Outraged by the audacity of the Japanese attack on the Philippines, Pilipinos rose to the challenge and volunteered for service. From all walks of life, all ages, and throughout the country, Pilipinos offered their services to serve their country in this time of war.

On the 50th day, elsewhere in Asia, the Japanese had already taken Guam, HongKong, Wake Island, Malaya and Singapore. Only the Philippines remained unconquered. Bataan put the Philippines in the world map. US President Franklin Roosevelt cabled Philippine President Manuel Quezon praising the Pilipinos for "upholding the most magnificent traditions of free democracy". British Prime Minister Winston Churchill remarked "the Filipino soldier was the best warrior in the world". That brave, valiant, noble stand turned the tide of World War II --- an inspiration to all others fighting against fascism.

Come April 9, 2006, the Galing Pilipino Movement will commemorate this inspiring historical world-changing event by retracing in reverse the infamous death march route through an educational-cultural fun bike tour. From all walks of life, all ages and all throughout the country, GPM members, volunteers, partners and supporters will participate in this history-making LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour. The Tour begins on April 6 at Capas, Tarlac, moving on to San Fernando, Pampanga on April 7 and culminating at Balanga, Bataan on April 8. At various tour stops, local activities have been organized by local governments and their communities to welcome visitors and share their part of history in an engaging manner. On April 9 itself, a one-hour radio special will be aired on DZRH highlighting the significance of this important historical moment.

Putting this event together is a showcase of the true Galing Pilipino bayanihan spirit. Chowking enabled the realization of this dream project by hosting the organizational meetings, providing for food and sponsoring the Mabuhay Concerts of this Tour. These concerts will highlight the rich and delightful cultural presentations of Edru Abraham's Kontra-Gapi, exponents of the YugYog TugTog Pinoy fusion music-dance. Infusing meaningful drama in dance are the Marikina Dance Guild and Teatro Marikeno. LGUs led by Bataan Governor Garcia, Capas Mayor Catacutan and San Fernando Mayor Rodriguez have made preparations for the red carpet welcome for the LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour-ists. Some 500 Manila bikers led by the Inquirer Cycling Club, Cycad, the Fireflies and other groups will join local bikers in Capas, San Fernando and Bataan for this bike caravan relay culminating on Saturday April 8. Daki-Lahi, ADHIKA and SAMPAKA historians,UP History Department led by Dr. Ferdinand Llanes and local historians and tourism officers in the various provinces have imparted their knowledge and insights to make this tour program a meaningful historical encounter. Sunlife sponsored the commemorative activity at the Km-111 Marker in consonance with its celebration of its 111 years of existence in the Philippines. Blasting the event in cyberspace is GPM cyber media partner, www.YEHEY.com. DDB Philippines partnered in this advocacy by providing creative advertising services, event management expertise through Rapp Collins and publicity support as part of its DDB Cares Program. GPM Media Partners, Philippine Daily Inquirer and DZRH went all out to help get the message across. The dance-drama performances and commemorative programs were developed by Ellen Cruz with the special participation of John Arcilla. Magnolia, Victoria Court, San Mig Café, Cosmos, Balibago Waterworks, Red Bull, Dinsmor Magnets contributed to make this affair a memorable first.

GP Young Leaders like Jessie Consolacion (PUP Most Outstanding Student Teacher/ GPM -PUP Chapter Head), 15-year old Boy Scout Joshua Young, GPM-Adamson Chapter Head, Xavier Babista, OJ Mendoza, Noy Basilio of Sir Luther CareGiver School in Pampanga, and a host of volunteers like Maeyeth and Alex Cayabyab-Cadungog, Sonia de Guzman, Jody and Yam dela Cruz, Marose Borromeo (GPM-Visayas Area Head), PUP Director Avelina Bucao, Rudy de Mesa and Techie and Oscar Banzon of Bataan. Fernan Yusi of Balibago Waterworks, Ian and Atz King, Raul Ignacio and Marco Martinez of Victoria Court, Albet Buddahim, Christy Jofer and many others gladly gave of their personal time and resources to make this grand plan come alive.

This is the life-giving spirit that brings out the Galing in our being Pilipino as we celebrate this year's Araw ng Kagitingan. It is our hope that by doing what we did, we will rekindle new life in our sense of history and reverse the 'death mentality' and the 'failure baggage' of our colonial past. Thus, the LakBYKE Mabuhay will not be merely a tour, it will be the handwriting of our Galing Pilipino history-in-the-making.

On-site Reg

9:00am Galing Panimula
Dominican College
10:30am Ceremonial Take Off
led by GPM Trustee Akiko Thomson
and Capas Mayor Catacutan
10:45am KM xx : Santo Domingo Train Station
Wreath Laying Ceremony
11:15am KM xx : Tambo
Memorial Visit to Honor Capas Women

10am to 12pm GALING LEADERSHIP FORUM
Reviving the Hero in Every Pilipino
by Prof. Lino Dizon, Tarlac State University
Executive Director,Tarlac Study Center
President, ADHIKA Central Luzon
Venue: Dominican College Library

12:00pm Galing Salu-Salo
Gabaldon Elementary School
hosted by Capas Mayor Catacutan

APRIL 7
On-site Registration: San Fernando Tou

TARLAC
8:15am KM xx : Mabalacat-Bamban Boundary
Salubong sa Bamban

10:00am KM 102 : San Fernando Train Station
Galing Salubong at Pambungad na Pananalita
Galing Pilipino Saludo sa mga Beterano

PAMPANGA
12nn to2pm Galing Salu-Salo
Panlilio Ancestral Home

2pm to 4pm Galing Lakbay Pampanga
Wow Philippines Pampanga Tour

APRIL 8
On-site Registration: Bata

MANILA
4:00am Bikers Breakfast
5:00am Bikers Departure from Quezon Circle
6:00am Manila Bikers arrive in San Fernando

PAMPANGA
7:00am GALING LAKBAY PADYAK
7:30am Handog-Pampalamig saGuagua/Lubao
Hosted by Balibago Waterworks

8:00am KM 68 : Layak
Galing Salubong sa Layak

DIWA NG BATAAN TOUR
9:00am KM 65 : Hermosa
Galing Salubong sa Hermosa
10:00am KM 61 : Orani
Galing Pagpugay sa Orani
11am KM 44 : Balanga
Galing Parangal sa Balanga ng mga Boy Scouts

APRIL 9 ARAW NG KAGITINGAN R
hosted by Andy Vit

Ang Dangal ng Pilipino…
The Honor of the Filipino…
El Honor del Filipino…

By Josias T. dela Cruz

After almost twenty five years of focusing on career and quality of life development, I found myself taking time out of a busy work schedule to attend the Karangalan Conference last January. In the siesta hour workshop of the second day, I was jolted by the provocative vision sharing of a tall, articulate and passionate woman about the Galing Pilipino Movement. Not only was my interest completely captured. Its patriotic message resonated within me, like a much-loved, long-forgotten refrain… renewed and refreshed. I was enthralled by the entire vision of the Mabuhay March as it gave me an opportunity to reconnect with my roots and become part of ongoing history.

Moreover, I found myself fully alive and awake in the wee hours of January 29,2006, writing a poem… in three languages… in one sitting. I found myself making a firm quality decision to become part of GPM, taking the lead in the Bataan leg of the ambitious LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour. I found myself going back to my roots, visiting Bataan more times in one month than I have done in the last 3… no, make that, in the last 5 years. I found myself. I am Pilipino. Glad and proud.

The Honor of the Filipino

In the very heart of a volcano
Amidst the fury of a hurricane
And the majesty of the waves crashing on the rocks
I was born of fire, of wind and of water

With the temblor as my brother
The typhoon as my sister,
In me dwells the spirit of the eagle
And the courage of the tamaraw, for
MY HEART IS FILIPINO!

With a mind as keen as the morning's sunburst
With beauty as rare as a pearl
I am gifted with the tongues of men,
The language of the soul,
And the laughter of the waterfall

Imbued with respect and with reverence for the Creator
The resilience and humility of the bamboo
I am blessed with love and tenderness
As serene as a moon-bathed night, for
MY SOUL IS FILIPINO!

Throughout the ages
I have been master of the seas
Guardian of the mountain forests
And protector of the plains

I fear not the darkness, nor the maelstrom
For in me lives the blood of my forbears
A proud race of heroes
Who have spared nothing at the altar of valor

I will chart the course of destiny
With the honor and dignity
That befits the nobility to which I was born for
I proclaim with a ringing voice:
MY RACE IS FILIPINO!

Ang Dangál ng Pilipino

Sa kaibuturan ng pusò ng bulkán
At ngitngít ng unós
Sa hampás ng alon sa bató
Sa apóy, sa hangin at sa tubig
Ako'y isinilang

Kapatíd ko ang lindól
Patí na ang bagyó
Sa akin ay buháy ang diwà ng ágila
At ang tapang ng támaraw
Dahil ANG PUSÒ KO AY PILIPINO!

May isip na sintalím ng pagsabog ng umaga
Kariktáng kasintangi ng perlas
Hinandugán akó ng mga salitâ ng tao,
Ng wika ng káluluwa,
At ng halakhák ng talón

Sa aki'y nananahan ang paggalang
Ang pagpipitagan sa Lumaláng
Ang tíbay at kababaang-loób ng kawayan
Binasbasán ng pag-íbig at lambíng
Tulad ng payapang gabí sa liwanag ng buwán
Dahil ANG DIWÀ KO AY PILIPINO

Sa tinakbó ng mahabang panahón
Panginoon akó ng karagatán
Tagapag-alaga ng kagubatan sa kabundukan
At tagapagtanggól ng mga kapatagan

Sa kadiliman o sa sigwa, pangambá ay walâ
Sapagká't dugô ng mga ninunò sa aki'y nananalaytáy
Marangál na lahì ng mga bayani
Na walang ipinagkait sa dambana ng kagitingan

Itataguyod ko ang kinabukasan
Na may sariling kahalagahán at karangalan
Karapat-dapat sa mahárlika kong kapanganakan
Sa tinig na umaalingawngáw, aking isisigáw:
ANG LAHÌ KO AY PILIPINO!

El Honór del Filipino

En el mismo corazón de un volcán
Dentro de la furia de un huracán
Y la majestad de los ondas que se estrellan en las rocas
Nací del fuego, del viento y del agua

Con el temblor que es mi hermano
El tifón que es mi hermana,
En mí vive el espiritu del ágila
Y el coraje del tamaraw, porque
¡MI CORAZÓN ES FILIPINO!

Con una mente tan penetrante
Como el sol resplandeciente de la mañana
Con belleza tan rara como una perla
Soy dotado de las lenguas de gentes,
La idioma del alma,
Y la risa de la cascada

Imbuido con respeto, con reverencia para el Creador
La resistencia y humildad del bambú
Poseo el regalo del amor y de la ternura

Tan ser
na, por
¡MI AL

A travé
He sido
Guarda
Y prote

Temo n
Porque
tepasad
Una ra
Que no

Arderé
Con el h
Que es
porque
Proclam
¡MI RAZ

GPM Foundation Trustees • Pedro Roxas • Erly de Guzman • Akiko Thomson • Ramon García • Tito Panlilio • Nonoy

GALING PILIPINO MOVEMENT (GPM)

The Galing Pilipino Movement is a non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian private sector initiative that recognizes, affirms and propagates what is good and ***galing*** (excellent) about being Pilipino, about Pilipinos and about the Philippines as a counterforce to the negativism and cynicism that erodes our sense of nationalism and collective worth. GPM wants to make ***galing*** the brand mark of this generation of Pilipinos.

www.galingpilipino.org
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Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City
Tel/Fax: 631-3932 / 633-1089
Email: galing_pilipino@yahoo.com
Mobile No: 0917-8354829

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g Galing. Pilipinong Magiting.

PRIL 6 THURSDAY
tration: Capas Town Plaza

1pm to 4pm Galing Lakbay Tarlac
1pm Santo Domingo
2pm Talaga Tinapa Factory
3pm LABDE Army Group
4pm Capas Shrine

1pm to 3pm YugYog TugTog Pinoy Workshop
by Kontra-Gapi
Venue: Dominican College AVR

4:45pm KM 111 : Pagpugay ng Sunlife
Paghahandog at Panalangin
Venue: Capas Shrine and Hanging Bridge

5:00pm GALING PARANGAL PARA SA MGA BAYANI
Capas National Shrine

8pm MABUHAY CONCERT By Kontra Gapi, Marikina Dance Guild and Teatro Marikeño
Capas Plaza

FRIDAY
rism Office and Bulihago Waterworks

2pm to 4pm GALING LEADERSHIP FORUM
Venue: Panlilio Ancestral Home

Paggunita sa Kasaysayan ng Death March
Prof. June Joson, President SAMPAKA

Propagating Galing Pilipino Culture
for Nation-Building
by Fray Francis Musni, ADHIKA Central Luzon

6pm Galing Hapunan
hosted by Tito Panlilio
Venue: Panlilio Ancestral Home

8pm GALING MABUHAY CONCERT
Venue: San Fernando City Hall Grounds

ATURDAY
n Provincial Tourism Office

12nn to 2pm GALING LEADERSHIP FORUM
Venue: Balanga Elementary School
Meaning and Relevance of the Heroes Trek
by Prof Isagani Giron, SAMPAKA and Heroes Trek
Rekindling the Spirit of Heroic Nationalism
by Prof. Jaime Veneracion, ADHIKA Founder

PAGGUNITA TOUR
1:00pm KM 41 : Pilar
Galing Pagpugay sa Pilar
2:00pm KM 15 : Batangas Dos
Galing Pagpugay sa Batangas
3:00pm KM 00 : Mariveles
Paghandog ng Parangal sa Mariveles
5:00pm GALING PARANGAL PARA SA MGA BETERANO AT BAYANI
Bataan Provincial Capitol Grounds
6:30pm FIREWORKS
7:00pm GALING PILIPINO MABUHAY CONCERT with Laser Show

IO SPECIAL DZRH 10 TO 1 AM
Erly de Guzman

no como una noche besado por la lu-
ue
IA ES FILIPINO!

de las edades
-l amo de los mares
le los bosques de las montañas
tor de las llanuras

la oscuridad, ni el torbellino
n mi esta viva la sangre de mis an-
s
orgullosa de héroes
an ahorrado nada en el altar de valor

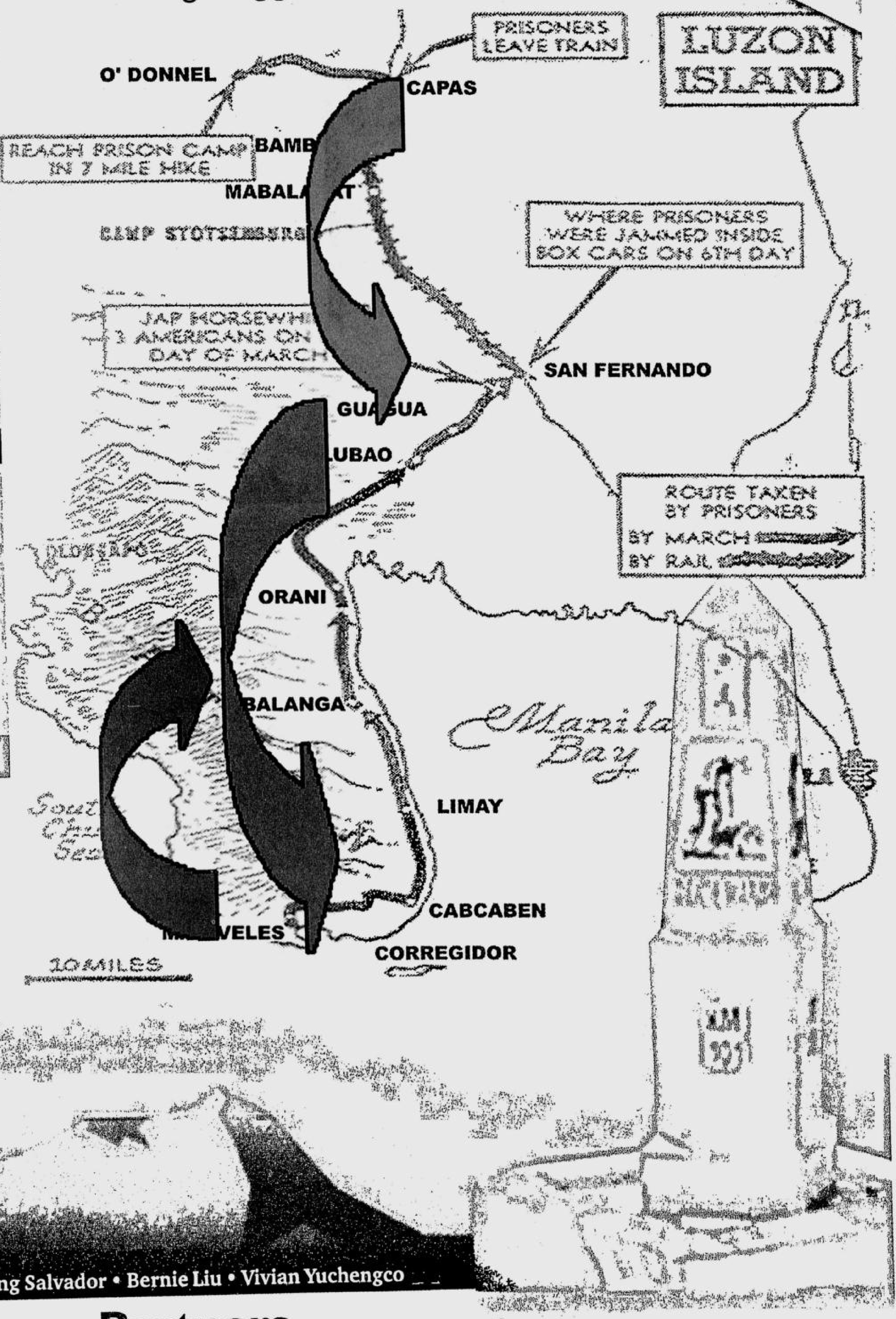
l curso del destino
onór y la dignidad
digno a la nobleza a la cual nací,

o còn una voz que sonido:
A ES FILIPINO!

LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour 2006

April 5 to 8, 2006

Isang Paggunita sa Kasaysayan


PRISONERS LEAVE TRAIN
LUZON ISLAND
O' DONNEL
CAPAS
REACH PRISON CAMP IN 7 MILE HIKE
BAMB
MABALA AT
CAMP STOTSENBURG
WHERE PRISONERS WERE JAMMED INSIDE BOX CARS ON 6TH DAY
JAP HORSEWHI 3 AMERICANS ON DAY OF MARCH
SAN FERNANDO
GUA UA
LUBAO
ROUTE TAKEN BY PRISONERS
BY MARCH
BY RAIL
ORANI
BALANGA
Manila Bay
South China Sea
LIMAY
CABCABEN
M VELES
CORREGIDOR
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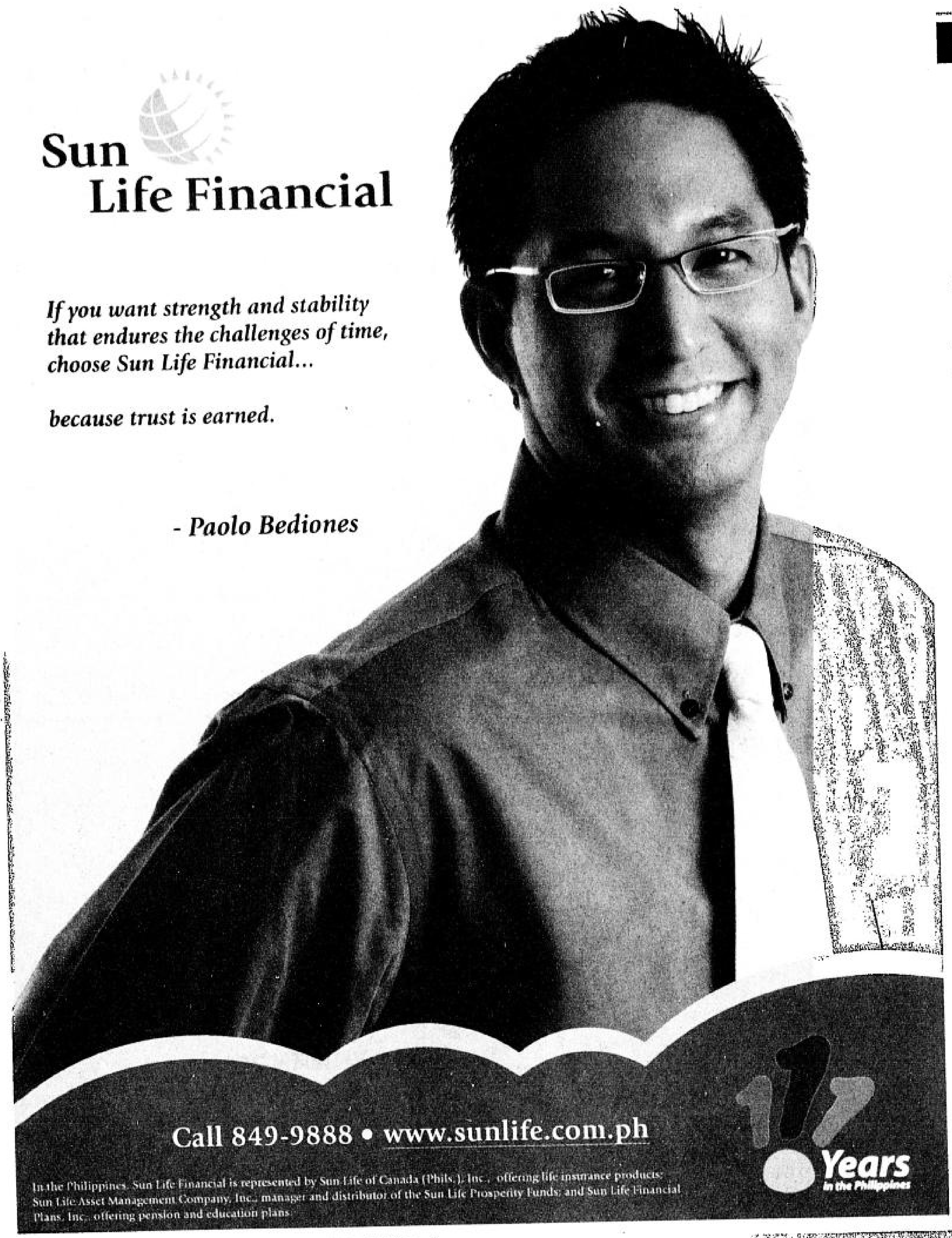
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LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour 2006
April 5-8, 2006

What is LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour?

The LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour is an educational-cultural bike tour that will retrace in reverse the grueling death march by Pilipino World War II veterans and heroes and the valiant defense of our country against a superior enemy. Their victory of spirit and fact enrich our sense of national pride.

What is its purpose?

This event seeks to achieve a consciousness reversal in our observance of historical events. Instead of focusing on 'defeats' like the Fall of Bataan we will focus our historical perspective on the uplifting values of solidarity and collective self-reliance manifested by our Galing Pilipino heroes.

Valor of Defeat to Victory of Spirit

Instead of paying homeage to valor in defeat (usually linked to April 9, 1945 "Fall of Bataan"), the victory of spirit will be highlighted by presenting the historical fact that it was U.S. General Edward King who surrendered to the Japanese, compelling the U.S. commissioned Pilipino forces into the infamous "death march".

LakBYKE

To commemorate this momentous event, the **LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour** will retrace the march in reverse starting from Capas, Tarlac, leading to San Fernando, Pampanga, and finally ending in Balanga, Bataan. **LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour** will traverse 111kms.

Local festivities will be featured at each stop over to celebrate the unique culture, food, traditions and sights. To expound on the historical significance of this celebration, GP Kapihans, Leadership Forums and Mabuhay Concerts will be held as part of the Bisita Pilipinas program of the Galing Pilipino Movement.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name ______________________________
Home Address ______________________________
____
Landline ____________________ Mobile ______________
Occupation ______________________________
Company ______________________________
Office Address ______________________________
____
Email ______________________________
Sex ____ Age ____ Blood Type ______ Jersey size ________

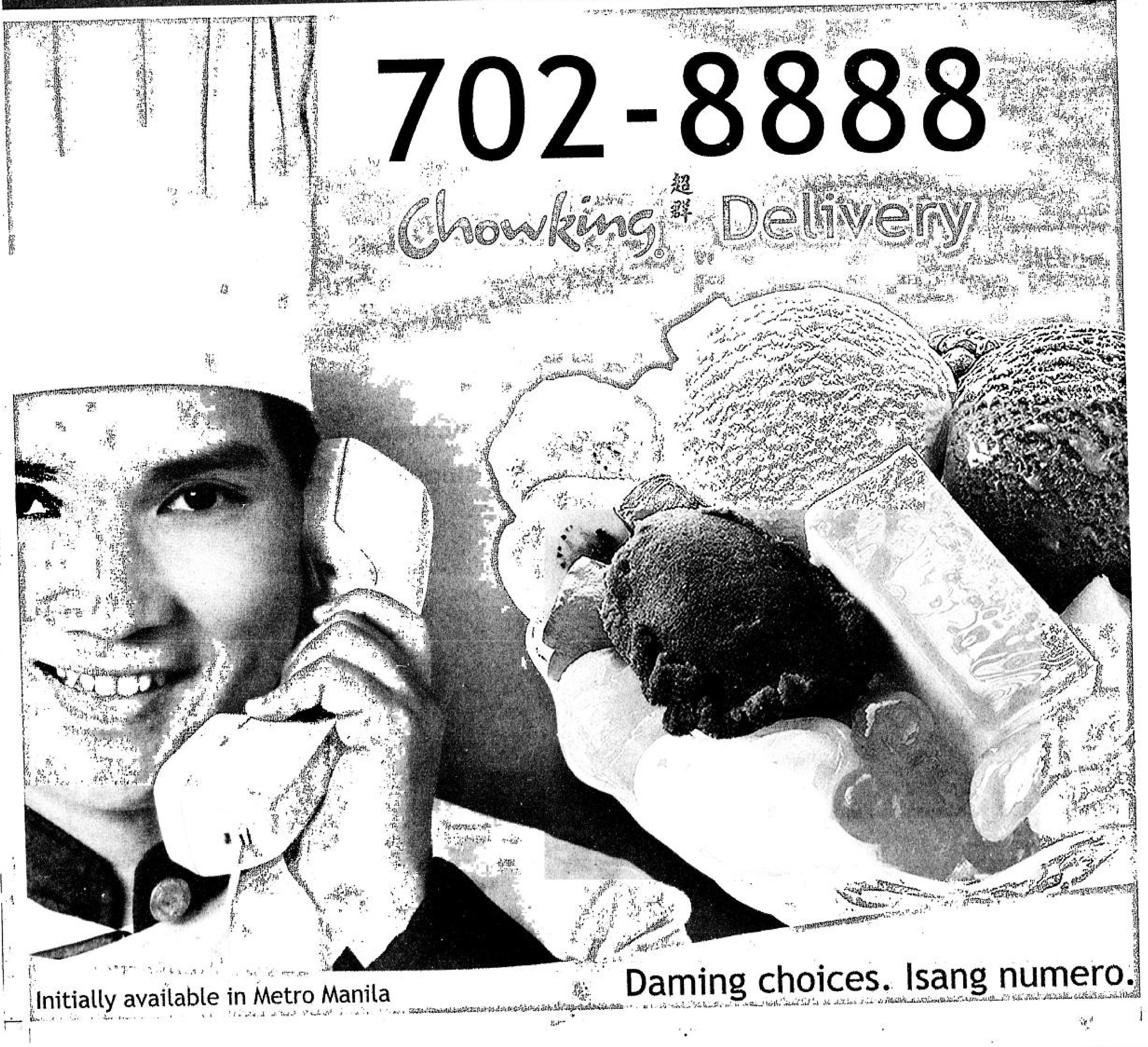
LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour leg to join (please check):
Tarlac to Pampanga (April 6, 2006) ☐
Pampanga to Bataan (April 7, 2006) ☐
Bataan (April 8, 2006) ☐

Person/s and contact numbers to be notified in case of emergencies
____
Bike Club/Group/Association: ______________________________

Manila bikers are scheduled on **April 8, 2006 only**. Please fax accomplished form to **Tel/fax# 631.3932/ 633.1089.**

[ ] Manila Biker w/ Meals (P1,000)
[ ] Manila Biker w/out Meals (P500)
[ ] Provincial Biker w/ Meals (P500)
[ ] Provincial Biker w/out Meals (P300)

LakBYKERS kit includes Jersey, Toiletry Kit, Route Map and souvenir Item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